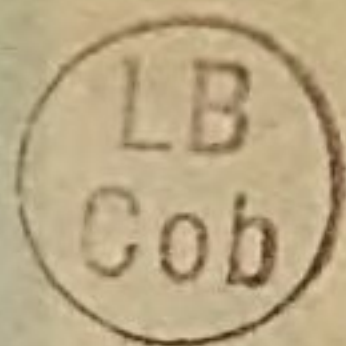


To have the last page of a newspaper, 1811

1790

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William
Shakspeare

12th vii. Shakspeare

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which is the only thing
ever
John Shakspeare
John Robinson
Hannet Sadler
Robert W. G. G. G.

81
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SPECIMENS of FANS.

*from the Drawings of Titian & Cesare Vecelli
as referred to in the Notes on the Merry Wives of Windsor.*

ANNOTATIONS

B Y

SAM. JOHNSON & GEO. STEEVENS,

A N D

THE VARIOUS COMMENTATORS

U P O N

MACBETH.

WRITTEN BY

WILL. SHAKSPERE.

—*SIC ITUR AD ASTRA.*

VIRG.

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ANNOTATIONS
UPON
MACBETH.

ACT I.

Line 3. Hurly-burly.] HOWEVER mean this word may seem to modern ears, it came recommended to Shakspeare by the authority of Henry Pecham, who, in the year 1577, published a book professing to treat on the *ornaments* of language: it is called *The Garden of Eloquence*, and has this passage “Onomatopeia, when we invent, devise, fayne, and make a name, imitating the sownd of that it signifyeth, as *hurliburly*, for an *uprore*, and *tumultuous stirre*.” HENDERSON.

4. *When the battle's lost and won:*] *i. e.* the battle, in which Macbeth was then engaged. These wayward sisters, as we may see in a note on the third scene of this act, were much concerned in battles.

Hæ nominantur Valkyriæ; quas quodvis ad prælium Odinus mittit. WARBURTON.

8. *There to meet with Macbeth.*] Thus the old copy. Mr. Pope, and after him other editors, read :

There I go to meet Macbeth.

The insertion, however, seems to be injudicious. To *meet with Macbeth*, was the general design of all the witches in going to the heath, and not the particular business or motive of any one of them in distinction from the rest; as the interpolated words, *I go*, in the mouth of the third witch, would most certainly imply. Perhaps Shakspeare wrote, *to GREET*.— STEEVENS.

9. ———*Gray-malkin !*————] From a little black letter book, entitled, *Beware the Cat*, 1584, I find it was permitted to a Witch *to take on her a cattles body nine times*. Mr. Upton observes, that, to understand this passage, we should suppose one familiar calling with the voice of a cat, and another with the croaking of a toad.

Again, in *Newes from Scotland, &c.* (a pamphlet, of which the reader will find the entire title in a future note on this play) “Moreover she confessed, that at the time when his majestie was in Denmarke, shee beeing accompanied with the parties before specially mentioned, tooke a *cat* and christened it, and afterward bound to each part of the *cat* the cheefest part of a dead man, and several jointes of his bodie, and that in the night following the said *cat* was conveyed into the middest of the sea by all these witches sayling in their riddles or cives as is aforesaid, and so left the said *cat* right before the towne of Leith in Scotland.

This

This doone, there did arise such a tempest at sea, as a greater hath not been seene," &c. STEEVENS.

"——Some say, they [witches] can keepe devils and spirits, in the likeness of *todes* and *cats*." Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, Book I. c. 4. TOLLET.

10. *Paddock calls :——Anon.——*] This, as well as the two following lines, is given in the folio to the three Witches. Preceding editors have appropriated the first of them to the second Witch.

According to the late Dr. Goldsmith, and some other naturalists, a *frog* is called a *paddock* in the North; as in the following instance in *Cæsar and Pompey*, by Chapman, 1602:

"——*Paddockes, todes, and watersnakes.*"

In Shakspeare, however, it certainly means a *toad*. The representation of St. James in the witches' house (one of the set of prints taken from the Painter called *Hellish Breugel*, 1566) exhibits witches flying up and down the chimney on brooms; and before the fire sit *grimalkin* and *paddock*, i. e. a *cat* and a *toad*, with several *baboons*. There is a cauldron boiling, with a witch near it, cutting out the tongue of a snake, as an ingredient for the charm. A representation somewhat similar likewise occurs in *Newes from Scotland*, in a pamphlet already quoted. STEEVENS.

11. *Fair is foul, and foul is fair :*] i. e. we make these sudden changes of the weather. And Macbeth, speaking of this day, soon after says:

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

WARBURTON.

The common idea of witches has always been, that they had absolute power over the weather, and could raise storms of any kind, or allay them, as they pleased. In conformity to this notion, Macbeth addresses them in the fourth act :

Though you untye the winds, &c. STEEVENS.

I believe the meaning is, that *to us*, perverse and malignant as we are, *fair is foul, and foul is fair*.

JOHNSON.

This expression seems to have been proverbial. Spenser has it in the 4th book of the *Faery Queen* :

“Then *fair grew foul, and foul grew fair* in sight.”

FARMER.

16. *This is the serjeant,*] Holinshed is the best interpreter of Shakspeare in his historical plays; for he not only takes his facts from him, but often his very words and expressions. That historian, in his account of Macdowald's rebellion, mentions, that on the first appearance of a mutinous spirit among the people, the king sent a *serjeant at arms* into the country, to bring up the chief offenders to answer the charge preferred against them; but they, instead of obeying, *misused the messenger with sundry reproaches, and finally slew him*. This *serjeant at arms* is certainly the origin of the *bleeding serjeant* introduced on this occasion. Shakspeare just caught *the name* from Holinshed, but the rest of the story not suiting his purpose, he does not adhere to it. The stage direction of entrance, where the *bleeding captain* is mentioned, was probably the work of the player editors, and not of Shakspeare.

STEEVENS.

23. ——— *Macdonel*] According to Holinshed we should read *Macdowald*. The folio reads *Macdonwold*.
STEEVENS.

26. ——— *from the western isles*
Of *Kernes and Gallow-glasses* is supplied;] *Of* and *with* are indiscriminately used by our ancient writers. So, in the *Spanish Tragedy*:

“Perform’d of pleasure by your son the prince.”

Again, in *God’s Revenge against Murder*, hist. vi.

“SyPontus in the mean time is prepared of two wicked gondaliers,” &c. Again, in *The History of Helyas, Knight of the Sun*, bl. let. no date: “—he was well garnished of spear, sword, and armoure,” &c. These are a few out of a thousand instances which might be brought to the same purpose. STEEVENS.

28. *And fortune, on his damn’d quarry smiling,*] Thus the old copy; but I am inclined to read *quarrel*. *Quarrel* was formerly used for *cause*, or for *the occasion of a quarrel*. The sense therefore is, *Fortune smiling on his execrable cause*, &c. This is followed by Dr. Warburton. JOHNSON.

The reading proposed by Dr. Johnson, and his explanation of it, are strongly supported by a passage in our author’s *King John*:

“——And put his *cause* and *quarrel*

“To the disposing of the cardinal.” MALONE.

The word *quarrel* occurs in Holinshed’s relation of this very fact, and may be regarded as a sufficient proof of its having been the term here employed by Shakspeare: “Out of the western isles there came to

Macdowald a great multitude of people, to assist him in that rebellious *quarrel*.” STEEVENS.

35. And ne’er *shook hands*, &c.] The old copy reads——*which never*. STEEVENS.

36. ——*he unseam’d him from the nave to the chops*,] So, in *Dido, Queene of Carthage*, by Tho. Nash, 1594:

“Then from the *navel* to the throat at once

“He *ript* old Priam.” STEEVENS.

39. *As when the sun ’gins his reflection*] The thought is expressed with some obscurity; but the plain meaning is this:——*As the same quarter, whence the blessing of day-light arises, sometimes sends us, by a dreadful reverse, the calamities of storms and tempests; so the glorious event of Macbeth’s victory, which promised us the comforts of peace, was immediately succeeded by the alarming news of the Norweyan invasion.* STEEVENS.

Sir William Davenant’s alteration of this passage affords a reasonably good comment upon it:

“But then this day-break of our victory

“Serv’d but to light us into other dangers,

“That spring from whence our hopes did seem to rise.” MALONE.

40. ——*thunders break*;] The word *break* is wanting in the oldest copy. The other folio and Rowe read *breaking*. Mr. Pope made the emendation. STEEVENS.

53. *As cannons overcharg’d with double cracks*;

So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:]

The word *cracks* is used in the old play of *King John*, 1591, and applied, as here, to ordnance:

“——as

“——as harmless and without effect,
“ As is the echo of a cannon’s crack.”

MALONE.

Thus, in *Richard II.* act i.

“ And let thy blows, doubly redoubled,
“ Fall,” &c.

STEEVENS.

See *Cracks*, in catch-word Alphabet.

57. ——memorize another *Golgotha*,] That is, to transmit another *Golgotha* to posterity. The word, which some suppose to have been coined by Shakspeare, is used by Spenser, in a sonnet to lord Buckhurst, prefixed to his *Pastorals*, 1579:

“ In vaine I thinke, right honourable lord,
“ By this rude rime to memorize thy name.”

WARTON.

62. *Enter Rosse and Angus.*] As only the thane of Rosse is spoken to, or speaks any thing in the remaining part of this scene, Angus is a superfluous character, the king expressing himself in the singular number:

Whence cam’st thou, worthy Thane?

I have printed it, *Enter Rosse only.* STEEVENS.

In scene III. Angus, who enters with Rosse, says to Macbeth,

——*We are sent*

To give thee from our royal master thanks, &c.
So that the old stage direction is certainly right.

MALONE.

64. ——*So should he look*

That seems to speak strange things.] i. e. that

B i i j

seems

seems *about* to speak strange things. Our author himself furnishes us with the best comment on this passage. In *Antony and Cleopatra* we meet with nearly the same idea :

“ The business of this man *looks out of him.*”

MALONE.

69. *Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky,
And fan our people cold.*] So, Gray :

“ Ruin cease thee, ruthless king !

“ Confusion on thy banners wait,

“ Tho’ fann’d by conquest’s crimson wing

“ They mock the air with idle state.” HENLEY.

To *flout* is to *mock* or *insult*. The banners are very poetically described, as waving in *mockery* or *defiance* of the sky. So, in *King Edward III.* 1599 :

“ And new replenish’d pendants cuff the air,

“ And beat the wind, that for their gaudiness

“ Struggles to kiss them.” STEEVENS.

So, in *King John* :

“ *Mocking* the air with *colours* idly spread.”

MALONE.

74. *Till that Bellona’s Bridegroom—*] This passage may be added to the many others, which shew how little Shakspeare knew of ancient mythology.

HENLEY.

75. —————with self-comparisons,] *i. e.* give him as good as he brought, shew’d he was his equal.

WARBURTON.

83. —————Saint Colmes’ inch,] The folio reads :

At Saint Colmes’ yinch.

Colmes-

Colmes-inch, now called *Inchcomb*, a small island lying in the Frith of Edinburgh, with an abbey upon it, dedicated to St. Columb: called by Camden *Inch Colm*, or the *Isle of Columba*.

Holinshed thus mentions the whole circumstance: “*The Danes that escaped, and got once to their ships, obtained of Macbeth for a great sum of gold, that such of their friends as were slaine, might be buried in Saint Colmes’ Inch. In memory whereof many old sepulchres are yet in the said Inch, graven with the arms of the Danes.*” *Inch*, or *Inshe*, in the Irish and Erse languages, signifies an island. See *Lhuyd’s Archæologia*.

STEEVENS.

95. Aroint thee,————] Aroint, or avaunt, be gone. POPE.

In Hearne’s Collections is a print from a very old drawing, in which St. Patrick is represented visiting hell, and putting the devils into great confusion by his presence, of whom one, that is driving the damned before him with a prong, has a label issuing out of his mouth with these words, OUT OUT ARONGT, of which the last is evidently the same with *aroint*, and used in the same sense as in this passage. JOHNSON.

Rynt you witch, quoth Besse Locket to her mother, is a north country proverb. The word is used again in *King Lear*:

“And aroint thee, witch, aroint thee.”

STEEVENS.

95. ———the rump fed ronyon————] The chief cooks

cooks in noblemen's families, colleges, religious houses, hospitals, &c. anciently claimed the emoluments or kitchen fees of kidneys, fat, trotters, *rumps*, &c. which they sold to the poor. The weird sister in this scene, as an insult on the poverty of the woman who had called her *witch*, reproaches her poor abject state, as not being able to procure better provision than offals, which are considered as the refuse of the tables of others.

COLEPEPER.

So, in Ben Jonson's *Staple of News*, old Penny-boy says to the Cook :

“ And then remember meat for my two dogs ;

“ Fat flaps of mutton, kidneys, *rumps*,” &c.

STEEVENS.

95. ——— *ronyon cries.*] *i. e.* scabby or mangy woman. French, *rogneux*, *royne*, scurf.

Thus Chaucer, in the *Romaunt of the Rose*, p. 551 :

“ ——— her necke

“ Withouten bleine, or scabbe, or *roine*.”

Shakspeare uses the word again in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

STEEVENS.

97. ——— *in a sieve I'll thither sail,*] Sir W. Davenant, in his *Albovine*, 1629 :

“ He sits like a witch sailing in a sieve.”

Again, in *Newes from Scotland*. Declaring the damnable life of Doctor Fian, a notable sorcerer, who was burned at Edinbrough in Januarie last, 1591 : which Doctor was register to the Devill, that sundrie times preached at North Baricke Kirke, to a number of notorious Witches. With the true examinations of the said Doctor and Witches, as
they

they uttered them in the presence of the Scottish king. Discovering how they pretended to bewitch and drowne his Majestie in the sea comming from Denmarke, with such other wonderfull matters as the like hath not bin heard at anie time. Published according to the Scottish copie. Printed for William Wright.——“and that all they together went to sea, each one in a *riddle* or *cive*, and went in the same very substantially with flaggons of wine, making merrie and drinking by the way in the same *riddles* or *cives*,” &c. Dr. Farmer found the title of this scarce pamphlet in an interleaved copy of *Maunsell's Catalogue*, &c. 1595, with additions by Archbishop Harsenet and Thomas Baker the Antiquarian. It is almost needless to mention, that I have since met with the pamphlet itself. STEEVENS.

98. *And like a rat without a tail,*] It should be remembered (as it was the belief of the times), that though a witch could assume the form of any animal she pleased, the tail would still be wanting.

The reason given by some of the old writers for such a deficiency, is, that though the hands and feet, by an easy change, might be converted into the four paws of a beast, there was still no part about a woman which corresponded with the length of tail common to almost all four-footed creatures. STEEVENS.

100. *I'll give thee a wind.*] This free gift of a wind is to be considered as an act of sisterly friendship, for witches were supposed to sell them. So, in *Summer's last Will and Testament*, 1600:

“——in

“ —in Ireland and in Denmark both,
 “ *Witches* for gold will sell a man a wind,
 “ Which in the corner of a napkin wrap’d,
 “ Shall blow him safe unto what coast he will.”

Drayton, in his *Moon-calf*, says the same.

STEEVENS.

106. — *the shipman’s card.*] The card is the paper on which the winds are marked under the pilot’s needle. So, in the *Loyal Subject*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

“ The *card* of goodness in your minds, that shews
 you

“ When you sail false.” STEEVENS.

110. *He shall live a man forbid:*] *i. e.* as one under a curse, an *interdiction*. So, afterwards, in this play:

“ By his own *interdiction* stands *accurs’d*.”

So, among the Romans, an outlaw’s sentence was, *Aquæ & Ignis interdiction*; *i. e.* he was forbid the use of water and fire, which implied the necessity of banishment.

THEOBALD.

Mr. Theobald has very justly explained *forbid* by *accursed*, but without giving any reason of his interpretation. To *bid* is originally *to pray*, as in this Saxon fragment:

He is prif þ bit 7 bote, &c.

He is wise that prays and makes amends.

As to *forbid* therefore implies to *prohibit*, in opposition to the word *bid* in its present sense, it signifies by the same kind of opposition to *curse*, when it is
 derived

derived from the same word in its primitive meaning.

JOHNSON.

It may be added that “*bitten* and *Verbieten* in the German signify to pray and to interdict.” S. W.

112. *Shall he dwindle, &c.*] This mischief was supposed to be put in execution by means of a waxen figure, which represented the person who was to be consumed by slow degrees.

So, in Webster’s *Dutchess of Malty*, 1623 :

“ ———it wastes me more

“ Than were’t my picture fashion’d out of wax,

“ Stuck with a magick needle, and then buried

“ In some foul dunghill.”

So Holinshed, speaking of the witchcraft practised to destroy king *Duffe* :

“ ———found one of the witches roasting upon a wooden broch an image of wax at the fire, resembling in each feature the king’s person,” &c.

“ ———for as the image did waste afore the fire, so did the bodie of the king break forth in sweat. And as for the words of the incantment, they served to keep him still waking *from sleepe*.” &c.

This may serve to explain the foregoing passage :

“ Sleep shall neither night nor day

“ Hang upon his penthouse lid.”

See *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, act ii. line 469, and
Note. STEEVENS.

113. *Though his bark cannot be lost,*

Yet it shall be tempest-tost.] So in *Newes from Scotland*, &c. a pamphlet already quoted. “*Againe it*

it is confessed, that the said christened cat was the cause of the *Kinges Majesties shippe*, at his comming forth of *Denmarke*, had a contrarie winde to the rest of his shippes then beeing in his companie, which thing was most straunge and true, as the *Kinges Majestie* acknowledgeth, for when the rest of the shippes had a faire and good winde, then was the winde contrarie and altogether against his Majestie. And further the sayde witch declared, that his Majestie had never come safely from the sea, if his faith had not prevayled above their ententions." To this circumstance perhaps our author's allusion is sufficiently plain.

STEEVENS.

121. *The weyward sisters hand in hand,*] Thus the old copies; Mr. Theobald restored the genuine reading.

* * *.

These *sisters* were the *Fates* of the northern nations; the three hand-maids of Odin. *Hæ nominantur Valkyriæ, quas quodvis ad prælium Odinus mittit. Hæ viros morti destinant, & victoriam gubernant. Gunna, & Rota, & Parcarum minima Skullda: per aëra & maria equitant semper ad morituros eligendos; & cædes in potestate habent.* Bartholinus de Causis contemptæ à Danis adhuc Gentilibus mortis. It is for this reason that Shakspeare makes them *three*; and calls them,

Posters of the sea and land;

and intent only upon death and mischief. However, to give this part of his work the more dignity, he intermixes, with this northern, the Greek and Roman superstitions, and puts Hecate at the head of their enchantments.

enchantments. And to make it still more familiar to the common audience (which was always his point) he adds, for another ingredient, a sufficient quantity of our own country superstitions concerning witches; their beards, their cats, and their broomsticks.

WARBURTON.

Wierd comes from the Anglo-Saxon *pyrd*, and is used as a substantive signifying a *prophecy*, by the translator of *Hector Boethius* in the year 1541, as well as for the *Destinies* by Chaucer and Holinshed. *Of the weirdis gevyn to Macbeth and Banquo*, is the argument of one of the chapters. Gawin Douglas, in his translation of *Virgil*, calls the *Parcæ* the *weird sisters*; and in *Ane verie excellent and delectabill Treatise intituled PHILOTUS, quhairin we may persave the greit inconveniences that fallis out in the Mariage betweene Age and Zouth*, Edinburgh, 1603, the word appears again:

“How dois the quheill of fortune go,

“Quhat wickit *wierd* has wrocht our wo.”

Again:

“Quhat neidis Philotus to think ill,

“Or zit his *wierd* to warie?”

The other method of spelling was merely a blunder of the transcriber or printer.

The *Valkyriæ*, or *Valkyriur*, were not barely three in number. The learned critick might have found, in *Bartholinus*, not only *Gunna*, *Rota*, et *Skullda*, but also, *Scogula*, *Hilda*, *Gondula*, and *Geiросcogula*. *Bartholinus* adds, that their number is yet greater, according to other writers who speak of them. They

were the *cup-bearers* of *Odin*, and *conductors* of the *dead*. They were distinguished by the *elegance* of their *forms*, and it would be as just to compare youth and beauty with age and deformity, as the *Valkyriæ* of the *North* with the *Witches* of *Shakspeare*. STEEVENS.

The following passage in Bellenden's translation of *Hector Boece* fully supports the emendation that has been made: "Be avanture Macbeth and Banquho were passand to Fores, quhair Kyng Duncane hapnit to be for the time, and met be the gait thre women clothit in elrage and uncouth weid. They were jugitt be pepill to be *weird* sisteris." MALONE.

128. *How far is't call'd to Fores?——*] The king at this time resided at *Fores*, a town in *Murray*, not far from *Inverness*. "It fortun'd (says Holinshed), as Macbeth and Banquo journeyed towards *Fores*, where the king then lay, they went sporting by the way, without other company, save only themselves, when suddenly in the midst of a laund there met them three women in strange and wild apparell, resembling creatures of the elder world," &c. STEEVENS.

132. *That man may question?——*] Are ye any beings with which man is permitted to hold converse, or of whom it is lawful to *ask questions*? JOHNSON.

134. *You should be women,*] In *Pierce Penilesse* his *Supplication to the Divell*, 1592, there is an enumeration of Spirits and their offices; and of certain watery spirits it is said——"by the help of Alynach, a spirit of the west, they will raise stormes, cause earthquakes, rayne, haile, or snow, in the clearest day
that

that is; and if ever they appeare to anie man, they come in *women's* apparell.” HENDERSON.

135. ———your beards———] *Witches* were supposed always to have hair on their chins. So, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, 1635 :

“ ———Some women have *beards*, marry they are half *witches*.” STEEVENS.

138. *All Hail, Macbeth!*———] It hath lately been repeated from Mr. Guthrie's *Essay upon English Tragedy*, that the *portrait* of Macbeth's *wife* is copied from Buchanan, “ whose spirit, as well as words, is translated into the play of Shakspeare; and it had signified nothing to have pored only on Holinshed for *facts*.”——“ *Animus etiam, per se ferox, prope quotidianis conviciis uxoris (quæ omnium consiliorum ei erat conscia) stimulabatur.*”—— This is the whole that Buchanan says of the *Lady*, and truly I see no more *spirit* in the Scotch, than in the English chronicler. “ The wordes of the three weird sisters also greatly encouraged him [to the murder of Duncan], but specially his wife lay sore upon him to attempt the thing, as she that was very ambitious, brenning in unquenchable desire to beare the name of a queene.” Edit. 1577, p. 244.

This part of Holinshed is an abridgement of Johne Bellenden's translation of the *noble clerk*, *Heſlor Boece*, *imprinted at Edinburgh*, in fol. 1541. I will give the passage as it is found there. “ His wife impacient of lang tary (*as all women ar*) specially quhare they are desirus of ony purpos, gaif hym gret artation to pur-

sew the third weird, that sche might be ane quene, calland hym oft tymis febyl cowart and nocht desyrus of honouris, sen he durst not assailze the thing with manheid and curage, quhilk is offerit to hym be benivolence of fortoun. Howbeit sindry otheris hes assailzeit sic thinges afore with maist terribyl jeopardyis, quhen they had not sic sickernes to succed in the end of thair laubouris as he had." p. 173.

But we can *demonstrate*, that Shakspeare had not the story from Buchanan. According to *him*, the weird sisters salute Macbeth: "Una Angusiæ Thanum, altera Moraviæ, tertia Regem."—Thane of Angus, and of Murray, &c. but according to Holinshed, immediately from Bellenden, as it stands in Shakspeare: "The first of them spake and sayde, All hayle Makbeth, Thane of Glammis,—the second of them sayde, Hayle Makbeth, Thane of Cawder; but the third sayde, All hayle Makbeth, that hereafter shall be *king of Scotland*." p. 243.

1 Witch. *All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis!*

2 Witch. *All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!*

3 Witch. *All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be king hereafter!*

Here too our poet found the equivocal predictions, on which his hero so fatally depended: "He had learned of certaine wysards, how that he ought to take heede of Macduffe:—and surely hereupon had he put Macduffe to death, but a certaine witch, whom
he

he had in great trust, had tolde, that he should neuer be slain with *man borne of any woman*, nor vanquished till the wood of Bernane came to the castell of Dun-sinane." p. 244. And the scene between Malcom and Macduff, in the fourth act, is almost literally taken from the *Chronicle*. FARMER.

138. ———*thane of Glamis!*] The thaneship of *Glamis* was the ancient inheritance of Macbeth's family. The castle where they lived is still standing, and was lately the magnificent residence of the earl of Strathmore. See a particular description of it in Mr. Gray's letter to Dr. Wharton, dated from *Glames Castle*. STEEVENS.

139. ———*thane of Cawdor!*] Dr. Johnson observes, in his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, that part of *Calder castle*, from which Macbeth drew his second title, is still remaining. STEEVENS.

143. *Are ye fantastical,*————] So, in Reginald Scott's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584: "He affirmeth these transubstantiations to be but *fantastical*, not according to the veritie, but according to the appearance."

Shakspeare took the word from Holinshed, who in his account of the witches, says, "This was reputed at first but some vain *fantastical* illusion by Macbeth and Banquo." STEEVENS.

146. *Of noble having,*————] *Having* is estate, possession, fortune. See note on *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, act iii. line 189. STEEVENS.

161. *By Sinel's death,*————] The father of Macbeth. POPE.

174. ——— *eaten of the insane root,*] Shakspeare alludes to the qualities anciently ascribed to hemlock. So, in Greene's *Never too late*, 1616: "You gaz'd against the sun, and so blemished your sight; or else you have *eaten of the roots of hemlock*, that makes men's eyes *conceit unseen objects*." Again, in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*:

"——they lay that hold upon thy senses,

"As thou hadst snuft up *hemlock*." STEEVENS.

183. *His wonder and his praises do contend,*

Which should be thine, or his:——] *i. e.* private admiration of your deeds, and a desire to do them publick justice by commendation, contend in his mind for pre-eminence.—Or—There is a contest in his mind, whether he should indulge his desire of publishing to the world the commendations due to your heroism, or whether he should remain in silent admiration of what no words could celebrate in proportion to its desert. STEEVENS.

184. *Silenc'd with that——]* *i. e.* wrapp'd in silent wonder at the deeds performed by Macbeth, &c.

MALONE.

188. ——— *As thick as tale*

Came post with post;——] That is, posts arrived as fast as they could be counted. JOHNSON.

So, in *King Henry IV. Part III. act ii. sc. 1.*

"Tidings, *as swiftly as the post could run,*

"Were brought," &c. STEEVENS.

Milton has used *tale* in a similar sense, in *L'Allegro*:

"And

“ And every shepherd tells his *tale*,

“ Under the hawthorne in the dale ” HENLEY.

206. ————*with Norway*———] The folio reads :

———*with those of Norway*. STEEVENS.

216. —*trusted home*,] *i. e.* carried as far as it will go, suffered to prevail in its utmost extent ; of argument confidentially received or admitted home into your bosom. STEEVENS.

217. *Might yet enkindle you, &c.*] Might fire you with the hope of obtaining the crown. HENLEY.

224. ————*swelling act*] *Swelling* is used in the same sense in the prologue to *Henry V.*

———“ princes to act,

“ And monarchs to behold the *swelling* scene.”

STEEVENS.

226. *This supernatural soliciting*] *Soliciting* is incitement. JOHNSON.

233. ————*Present fears*

Are less than horrible imaginings :] *Present fears* are fears of things present, which Macbeth declares, and every man has found, to be less than the *imagination* presents them, while the objects are yet distant.

JOHNSON.

So, in the *Tragedie of Cræsus*, 1604, by lord Sterline :

“ For as the shadow seems more monstrous still,

“ Than doth the substance whence it hath the being,

“ So th’ apprehension of approaching ill

“ Seems greater than itself, whilst fears are lying.”

STEEVENS.

236. ————*single state of man*,——] The *single state of man* seems to be used by Shakspeare for an *individual*, in opposition to a *commonwealth*, or *conjunct body*.

JOHNSON

It is observed in the Critique upon the last edition of Shakspeare (see Monthly Review, August 1786), that the expression *SINGLE sol'd jest*—which is there said to be “solely singular for the *singleness*; *i. e.* for its tenuity”—explains “*SINGLE state of man*” to signify *feeble state of manhood*. * * *

236. ————*function*

*Is smother'd in surmise ; and nothing is,
But what is not.]*

All powers of action are oppressed and crushed by one overwhelming image in the mind, and nothing is present to me but that which is really future. Of things now about me I have no perception, being intent wholly on that which has yet no existence.

JOHNSON.

247. Time and the hour *runs through the roughest day*.] By this, I confess, I do not with his two last commentators imagine is meant either the tautology of time and the hour, or an allusion to time painted with an hour-glass, or an exhortation to time to hasten forward, but rather to say *tempus & hora*, time and occasion will carry the thing through, and bring it to some determined point and end, let its nature be what it will.

This

This note is taken from an *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakspeare*, &c. by Mrs. Montagu.

Such tautology is common to Shakspeare.

“The very *head* and *front* of my offending”
is little less reprehensible. *Time and the hour*, is time
with his hours. STEEVENS.

The same expression is used by a writer nearly contemporary with Shakspeare: “Neither can there be any thing in the world more acceptable to me than death, whose *hower* and *time* if they were as certayne,” &c. Fenton’s *Tragical Discourses*, 1579. Again, in Davison’s *Poems*, 1621:

“*Time’s* young *howres* attend her still,

“And her eyes and cheeks do fill

“With fresh youth and beauty.”

Again, in Hoffman’s *Tragedy*, 1631:

“The *hour*, the place, the *time* of your arrive.”

MALONE.

248. ———my dull brain was wrought

With things forgotten.———] My head was
worked, agitated, put into commotion. JOHNSON.

253. The interim having weigh’d it,———] This
intervening portion of time is almost personified: it is
represented as a cool impartial judge; as the pauser.
Reason. STEEVENS.

261. *With one that saw him die:*———] The be-
haviour of the *thane of Cawdor* corresponds in almost
every circumstance with that of the unfortunate earl
of Essex, as related by Stowe, p. 793. His asking
the

the queen's forgiveness, his confession, repentance, and concern about behaving with propriety on the scaffold, are minutely described by that historian. Such an allusion could not fail of having the desired effect on an audience, many of whom were eye-witnesses to the severity of that justice which deprived the age of one of its greatest ornaments, and Southampton, Shakspeare's patron, of his dearest friend.

STEEVENS.

266. ———*studied in his death,*] His own profession furnished our author with this phrase. To be *studied* in a part, or to have *studied* it, is yet the technical term of the stage. MALONE.

270. *To find the mind's construction in the face.*] The meaning, I think, is—*We cannot construe or discover the disposition of the mind by the lineaments of the face.* The same expression occurs in *The Second Part of King Henry IV.*

“*Construe the times to their necessities.*”

In *Hamlet* we meet a kindred phrase :

“ ———These profound heavens

“ You must *translate*; 'tis fit we understand them.”

Our author again alludes to his grammar, in *Troilus and Cressida*, act ii. sc. 3.

“ I'll *decline* the whole question.”

Dr. Johnson understood the word *construction*, in this place, in the sense of *frame* or *structure*; but the school-term was, I believe, intended by Shakspeare.—In his 93d *Sonnet*, we find a contrary sentiment asserted :

“ In

“ In many’s looks the false heart’s history

“ Is writ.”

MALONE.

279. *More is thy due than more than all can pay.*] More is due to thee, than, I will not say *all*, but, *more* than all, i. e. the greatest recompence can pay. Thus in Plautus we have *nihilo minus*.

There is an obscurity in this passage, arising from the word *all*, which is not used here personally (more than all persons can pay), but for the whole wealth of the speaker. So, more clearly, in *King Henry VIII*.

“ *More than my all is nothing.*”

MALONE.

283. ———servants;

Which do but what they should, by doing every thing.—] From Scripture: “ So when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which it was our duty to do.”

HENLEY.

284. *Which do but what they should, by doing every thing*

Safe toward your love and honour.] Of the last line of this speech, which is certainly, as it is now read, unintelligible, an emendation has been attempted, which Dr. Warburton and Mr. Theobald once admitted as the true reading:

———our duties

Are to your throne and state, children and servants,

Which do but what they should, in doing every thing,]

Fiefs to your love and honour.

My esteem for these criticks inclines me to believe
that

that they cannot be much pleased with these expressions *fiefs to love*, or *fiefs to honour*, and that they have proposed this alteration rather because no other occurred to them, than because they approved of it. I shall therefore propose a bolder change, perhaps with no better success, but *sua cuique placent*. I read thus :

—————our duties

*Are to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should, in doing nothing,
Save toward your love and honour.*

We do but perform our duty, when we contract all our views to your service, when we act with *no other* principle than regard to *your love and honour*.

It is probable that this passage was first corrupted by writing *safe* for *save*, and the lines then stood thus :

—————doing nothing

Safe toward your love and honour.

which the next transcriber observing to be wrong, and yet not being able to discover the real fault, altered to the present reading.

Dr. Warburton has since changed *fiefs* to *fief'd*; and Hanmer has altered *safe* to *shap'd*. I am afraid none of us have hit the right word. JOHNSON.

Mr. Upton gives the word *safe* as an instance of an adjective used adverbially; and says that it means here, *with safety, security, and suretiship*. Dr. Kenrick proposes to read :

Safe to ward your love and honour.

To ward is to defend. So, in *Titus Andronicus* :

“ ———it

“——it was a hand that *warded* him

“From thousand dangers.”

Again, more appositely, in *Love's Labour Lost* :

“——for the best *ward* of mine honour is rewarding my dependants.”

Again, in *King Richard III.* act v.

“Then, if you fight against God's enemies,

“God will, in justice, *ward* you as his soldiers.”

Dr. Kenrick might be right, if, instead of *love* and *honour*, the words had been *crown* and *honour*; but there is somewhat of obscurity in the idea of defending a prince's *love* in safety. STEEVENS.

Safe toward your love and honour.] Safe (*i. e.* saved) toward *you* love and honour; and then the sense will be—“Our duties are your children, and servants or vassals to your throne and state; who do but what they should, by doing every thing with a saving of their love and honour toward you.” The whole is an allusion to the forms of doing homage in the feudal times. The oath of allegiance, or *liege homage*, to the king, was absolute and without any exception; but *simple homage*, when done to a subject for lands holden of him, was always with a *saving* of the allegiance (the *love* and *honour*) due to the sovereign. “*Sauf la foy que jeo doy a nostre seignor le roy,*” as it is in Littleton. And though the expression be somewhat stiff and forced, it is not more so than many others in this play, and suits well with the situation of Macbeth, now beginning to waver in his allegiance. For, as our author elsewhere says,

D

“When

“ When love begins to sicken and decay,
 “ It useth an enforced ceremony.”

BLACKSTONE.

The following passage in *Cupid's Revenge*, a comedy by Beaumont and Fletcher, adds some support to Sir William Blackstone's emendation :

“ I'll speak it freely, always my *obedience*
 “ *And love preserved unto the prince.*”

So also do the following words, spoken by Henry, duke of Lancaster, to King Richard II. at their interview in the castle of Flint (a passage that Shakspeare certainly had read, and probably remembered): “ My sovereign lorde and kyng, the cause of my coming at this present is [*your honour saved*] to have againe restitution of my person, my landes, and heritage, through your favourable licence.” Holinshed's Chron. Vol. II. XX. Col. 1. a.

MALONE.

294. *My plenteous joys,
 Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
 In drops of sorrow.]*

“ ———Lacrimas non sponte cadentes

“ Effudit, gemitusque expressit pectore læto.”

Lucan, l. ix.

We meet with the same sentiment again in the *Winter's Tale*. “ It seem'd sorrow wept to take leave of them, for their joy waded in tears.” MALONE.

303. ———to Inverness,] Dr. Johnson observes, in his *Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland*, that the walls of the castle of Macbeth, at *Inverness*, are yet standing.

STEEVENS.

The

The circumstance of Duncan's visiting Macbeth is supported by history ; for, from the Scottish Chronicle it appears, that it was customary for the king to make a progress through his dominions every year. “ Inerat ei [Duncano] laudabilis consuetudo regni pertransire regiones semel in anno.” *Fordun. Scotichron. lib. iv. c. 44.*

“ Singulis annis ad inopum querelas audiendas perlustrabat provincias.” *Buchan. lib. vii. MALONE.*

310. *The prince of Cumberland !—*] So, Holinshed, *History of Scotland*, p. 171 : “ Duncan having two sonnes, &c. he made the elder of them, called *Malcome*, prince of *Cumberland*, as it were thereby to appoint him successor in his kingdome immediatlie after his decease. Macbeth sorely troubled herewith, for that he saw by this means his hope sore hindered (where, by the old laws of the realme, the ordinance was, that if he that should succeed were not of able age to take the charge upon himself, he that was next of bloud unto him should be admitted), he began to take counsel how he might usurp the kingdome by force, having a just quarrel so to doe (as he tooke the matter), for that Duncane did what in him lay to defraud him of all manner of title and claime, which he might, in time to come, pretend unto the crowne.”

The crown of Scotland was originally not hereditary. When a successor was declared in the life-time of a king (as was often the case), the title of *Prince of Cumberland* was immediately bestowed on him as the mark of his designation. *Cumberland* was at that time

held by Scotland of the crown of England, as a fief.

STEEVENS.

If the foregoing observation relative to the designation of the king's son as his successor, by conferring on him the title of prince of Cumberland, wanted any support, Bellenden's translation of *Hector Boece*, fol. 183, would furnish it: "In the meane tyme kyng Duncane maid his son Malcolme Prince of Cubir, to signify that he suld regne after hym, quilk was gret displeseir to Macbeth, for it maid plane derogation to the thrid weird promitted afore to hym be this weird sisteris."

MALONE.

322. —*by the perfectest report*——] By the best intelligence.

JOHNSON.

343. *And that which rather, &c.*] The difficulty of this line, "And that," &c. seems to have arisen from its not being considered as part of the speech uttered by the object of Macbeth's ambition. As such it appears to me, and as such it ought, in my opinion, to be distinguished by Italick.

"And that's *what* rather," &c. is Sir T. Hanmer's reading.

MALONE.

345. *That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;*] I meet with the same expression in lord Sterline's *Julius Caesar*, 1607:

"Thou in my bosom us'd to pour thy spright."
There is no earlier edition of *Macbeth* than that of 1623.

MALONE.

348. *Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.*——] The crown
to

to which fate destines thee, and which preternatural agents *endeavour* to bestow upon thee. WARBURTON.

Metaphysical, in our author's time, seems to have had no other meaning than *supernatural*. In the *English Dictionary* by H. C. 1655, *Metaphysicks* are thus explained: "Supernatural arts." MALONE.

359. ——— *The raven himself is hoarse.*] The messenger, says the servant, had hardly breath *to make up his message*; to which the lady answers mentally, that he may well want breath, such a message would add hoarseness to the raven. That even the bird, whose harsh voice is accustomed to predict calamities, could not *croak the entrance of Duncan* but in a note of unwonted harshness. JOHNSON.

361. ——— *Come, you spirits*

That tend on mortal thoughts, &c.] There is an invocation in *Bussy d' Ambois*, which in the turn of thought seems to resemble lady Macbeth's, but is less horrid:

Now all the peacefull regents of the night,
Silently gliding exhalations,
Languishing windes and murmuring fairs of waters
Sadnesse of heart and ominous securenesse
Enchantments, dead sleeps, all the friends of rest
That ever wrought upon the life of man,
Extend your utmost strengths; and this charm'd
houre

Fix like the center; make the violent wheeles
Of Time and Fortune stand; and great existens

D i i j

(The

(The maker's treasure) now not seeme to bee,
To all but my approaching friends and mee.

HENLEY.

362. ————*mortal thoughts*,————] This expression signifies not *the thoughts of mortals*, but *murderous, deadly, or destructive designs*. So, in act v.

“Hold fast the *mortal sword*.”

And in another place :

“With twenty *mortal* murders.” JOHNSON.

—————*Come, you spirits*

That tend on mortal thoughts, &c.] In *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil*, by T. Nashe, 1592 (a very popular pamphlet of that time), our author might have found a particular description of these spirits, and of their office.

“The second kind of devils, which he most employeth, are those northern Martii, called the *spirits of revenge*, and the authors of massacres, and seedsmen of mischief; for they have commission to incense men to rapines, sacrilege, theft, murder, wrath, fury, and all manner of cruelties : and they command certain of the southern spirits to wait upon them, as also great Arioch, that is termed *the spirit of revenge*.”

MALONE.

367. ————*nor keep peace between*

The effect, and it!——] The intent of lady Macbeth, evidently is, to wish that no womanish tenderness, or conscientious remorse, may hinder her purpose from proceeding to effect; but neither this, nor indeed any other sense, is expressed by
the

the present reading, and therefore it cannot be doubted that Shakspeare wrote differently, perhaps thus:

*That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep pace between
The effect and it.——*

To *keep pace between*, may signify *to pass between*, to *intervene*. *Pace* is on many occasions a favourite of Shakspeare's. This phrase is indeed not usual in this sense; but was it not its novelty that gave occasion to the present corruption? JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson's emendation, to say the least, is plausible. She requires that all *access* and *passage* be *stopped* against remorse, lest the *visitings* of nature, by their *frequent recurrence*, should induce her to relent, and relinquish her purpose.

Keep pace is an expression of Shakspeare in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*.—"His words and actions no more adhere and *keep pace*," &c. HENLEY.

368. ——*and it!*——] The folio reads, *and hit*.

STEEVENS.

Her purpose was to be effected by action. To *keep peace between the effect and purpose*, therefore means, to delay the execution of her purpose. For as long as there should be a peace between the effect and purpose, or, in other words, till hostilities were commenced, till some action should be performed, her purpose could not be carried into execution. There is no need of alteration.

A similar expression is found in a book which our
author

author is known to have read, *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet*, 1562 :

“ In absence of her knight, the lady no way could
 “ *Keep truce between her griefs and her, tho’ ne’er*
so fayne she would.”

The old reading (peace), I have since observed, is confirmed by the following passage in *King John*, in which a corresponding imagery may be traced :

“ Nay, in the body of this fleshly land,
 “ This kingdom, this confine of blood and breath,
 “ *Hostility and civil tumult reigns*
 “ *Between my conscience and my cousin’s death.*”

Sir W. D’Avenant’s strange alteration of this play sometimes affords a reasonably good comment on it. Thus, in the present instance :

“ ————Make thick

“ My blood, and stop all passage to remorse,
 “ That no relapses into mercy may
 “ Shake my design, *nor make it fall before*
 “ *’Tis ripen’d to effect.*”

MALONE.

369. ————*Take my milk for gall, ————*] *Take away my milk, and put gall into the place.* JOHNSON.

371. *You wait on nature’s mischief!*] *Nature’s mischief* is mischief done to nature, violation of nature’s order committed by wickedness. JOHNSON.

371. ————*Come, thick night, &c.*] A similar invocation is found in *A Warning for faire Women*, 1599, a tragedy which was certainly prior to *Macbeth* :

“ Oh sable night, sit on the eye of heaven,
 “ That it discern not this black deed of darkness!
 “ My

“ My guilty soul, burnt with lust’s hateful fire,
 “ Must wade through blood to obtain my vile
 desire :

“ Be then my *coverture*, thick ugly *night*!

“ The light hates me, and I do hate the light.”

MALONE.

372. *And pall thee———*] *i. e.* wrap thyself in a
pall. WARBURTON.

A *pall* is a robe of state. So, in the ancient black
 letter romance of *Syr Eglamoure of Artoys*, no date :

“ The knyghtes were clothed in *pall*.”

Again, in Milton’s *Penseroso* :

“ Sometime let gorgeous tragedy

“ In scepter’d *pall* come sweeping by.”

Dr. Warburton seems to mean the covering which is
 thrown over the dead. STEEVENS.

373. *That my keen knife———*] The word *knife*,
 which at present has a familiar meaning, was anciently
 used to express a *sword* or *dagger*. So, in the old
 black letter romance of *Syr Eglamoure of Artoys*, no
 date :

“ Through Goddes myght, and his *knyfe*,

“ There the gyaunte lost his lyfe.” STEEVENS.

374. *———the blanket of the dark,*] Drayton, in
 the 26th song of his *Polyolbion*, has an expression re-
 sembling this :

“ Thick vapours that, like *ruggs*, still hang the
 troubled air.” STEEVENS.

375. *To cry, Hold, hold!———*] On this passage
 there is a long criticism in the *Rambler*. JOHNSON.

In

In this criticism the epithet *dun* is objected to as a mean one. Milton, however, appears to have been of a different opinion, and has represented Satan as flying,

“——— in the *dun* air sublime.” STEEVENS.

To cry, Hold, hold! ———] The thought is taken from the old military laws which inflicted capital punishment upon “whosoever shall strike stroke at his adversary, either in the heat or otherwise, if a third do cry *hold*, to the intent to part them; except that they did fight a combat in a place inclosed: and then no man shall be so hardy as to bid *hold*, but the general.” P. 264. of Mr. Bellay’s *Instructions for the Wars*, translated in 1589. TOLLET.

Mr. Tollet’s note will likewise illustrate the last line in Macbeth’s concluding speech:

“And damn’d be him who first cries, *Hold, enough!*” STEEVENS.

375. *Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!]* Shakspeare has supported the character of lady Macbeth by repeated efforts, and never omits any opportunity of adding a trait of ferocity, or a mark of the want of human feelings, to this monster of his own creation. The softer passions are more obliterated in her than in her husband, in proportion as her ambition is greater. She meets him here on his arrival from an expedition of danger, with such a salutation as would have become one of his friends or vassals; a salutation apparently fitted rather to raise his thoughts to a level with her own purposes, than to testify her joy at his return,

return, or manifest an attachment to his person: nor does any sentiment expressive of love or softness fall from her throughout the play. While Macbeth himself, in the midst of the horrors of his guilt, still retains a character less fiend-like than that of his queen, talks to her with a degree of tenderness, and pours his complaints and fears into her bosom, accompanied with terms of endearment. STEEVENS.

378. *This ignorant present time,———*] *Ignorant* has here the signification of *unknowing*; that is, I feel by anticipation those future hours, of which, according to the process of nature, the present time would be *ignorant*. JOHNSON.

So, in *Cymbeline*:

“———his shipping

“Poor *ignorant* baubles,” &c. STEEVENS.

378. *———present time,———*] The word *time* is wanting in the old copy. It was supplied by Mr. Pope, and perhaps without necessity, as our author omits it in the first scene of *The Tempest*: “If you can command these elements to silence, and work the peace of *the present*, we will not hand a rope more.” The sense does not require the word *time*, and it is too much for the measure. Again, in *Coriolanus*:

“And that you not delay the *present*; but,” &c.

Again, in 1 *Corinthians*, ch. xv. v. 6: “—of whom the greater part remain unto this *present*.”

STEEVENS.

386. *Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men
May read, &c.]*

So, in *Pericles Prince of Tyre*, 1609 :

“ *Her face the book of praises, where is read*

“ *Nothing but curious pleasures.*” STEEVENS.

387. ————*to beguile the time,*

Look like the time ; ————] The same expression occurs in the 8th book of *Daniel's Civil Wars* :

“ He draws a traverse 'twixt his grievances :

“ *Looks like the time* : his eye made not report

“ Of what he felt within ; nor was he less

“ Than usually he was in every part ;

“ Wore a clear face upon a cloudy heart.”

It is almost needless to observe, that the *Poem of Daniel* was published many years before *Macbeth* could have been written. STEEVENS.

The expression is also found in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, by Beaumont and Fletcher :

“ ————Let's go off,

“ *And bear us like the time.*”

The 7th and 8th books of *Daniel's Civil Wars* were not published till the year 1609 [see the *Epistle Dedicatorie* to that edition], so that, if either poet copied the other, *Daniel* must have been indebted to *Shakspeare* ; for there can be little doubt that *Macbeth* had appeared before that year. MALONE.

399. *This castle hath a pleasant seat.*] This short dialogue between *Duncan* and *Banquo*, whilst they are approaching the gates of *Macbeth's* castle, has always appeared to me a striking instance of what in painting is termed *repose*. Their conversation very naturally

naturally turns upon the beauty of its situation, and the pleasantness of the air; and Banquo, observing the martlet's nests in every recess of the cornice, remarks, that where those birds most breed and haunt, the air is delicate. The subject of this quiet and easy conversation gives that repose so necessary to the mind after the tumultuous bustle of the preceding scenes, and perfectly contrasts the scene of horror that immediately succeeds. It seems as if Shakspeare asked himself, What is a prince likely to say to his attendants on such an occasion? Whereas the modern writers seem, on the contrary, to be always searching for new thoughts, such as would never occur to men in the situation which is represented.—This also is frequently the practice of Homer, who, from the midst of battles and horrors, relieves and refreshes the mind of the reader, by introducing some quiet rural image, or picture of familiar domestick life.

Sir J. REYNOLDS.

401. *Unto our gentle senses.*] *Senses* are nothing more *than each man's sense*. *Gentle sense* is very elegant, as it means *placid, calm, composed*, and intimates the peaceable delight of a fine day. JOHNSON.

403. ———*martlet*—] This bird is in the old edition called *barlet*. JOHNSON.

The correction is supported by the following passage in the *Merchant of Venice*:

“ ————like the *martlet*

“ Builds in the weather on the outward wall.”

STEEVENS.

406. —*coigne of vantage*,——] Convenient corner.
JOHNSON.

408. ——*most breed*,——] The folio—*must breed*.
STEEVENS.

411. *The love that follows, sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach
you*

*How you shall bid God yield us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.] The at-
tention that is paid us (says Duncan, on seeing Lady
Macbeth come to meet him) sometimes gives us pain,
when we reflect that we give trouble to others; yet still
we cannot but be pleased with such attentions, because
they are a proof of affection. So far is clear. Of the
following words I confess I have no very distinct con-
ception. Perhaps the meaning is—By being the occa-
sion of so much trouble, I furnish you with a motive to
pray to heaven to reward me for the pain I give you
[inasmuch as the having such an opportunity of shew-
ing your loyalty and attachment, may hereafter prove
beneficial to you;] and herein also I afford you a motive
to thank me for the trouble I give you [because, by shew-
ing me so much attention (however painful it may be
to me to be the cause of it), you have an opportunity
of displaying an amiable character; and of ingra-
tiating yourself with your sovereign; which finally may
bring you both honour and profit].* MALONE.

I believe the meaning is—*Though my design by this
visit was to testify my regard, yet it may be the occasion to
you of some inconvenience; but this, however, you will
overlook*

overlook for the sake of the motive, and, notwithstanding the trouble, acknowledge the love. In this respect I will give you reason to pray that God would reward me for your pains on my account, and also to thank me for the trouble I occasion you, by the abundant recompence you shall hereafter receive.—This interpretation is not only confirmed by Lady Macbeth's reply, but further by the king's addition :

“ ——— Give me your hand :

“ Conduct me to mine host; we love him highly,

“ And shall continue our graces towards him.”

BID is here used in the Saxon sense, to *pray*. The authorities cited by Mr. Steevens will support the explanation of *God yield us*. HENLEY.

413. *How you should bid God-yeld us——*] To bid any one *God-yeld him*, i. e. *God-yield him*, was the same as God reward him. WARBURTON.

I believe *yield*, or, as it is in the folio of 1623, *eyld*, is a corrupted contraction of *shield*. The wish implores not *reward*, but *protection*. JOHNSON.

I rather believe it to be a corruption of *God-yield*, i. e. *reward*. In *Antony and Cleopatra* we meet with it at length :

“ And the gods *yield* you for't.”

Again, in the interlude of *Jacob and Esau*, 1568 :

“ *God yelde* you, Esau, with all my stomach——”

Again, in the old metrical romance of *Syr Guy of Warkwick*, black letter, no date :

“ Syr, gouth Guy, *God yield* it you,

“ Of this great gift you give me now.”

God shield, means *God forbid*, and could never be used as a form of returning thanks. So, in Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*:

“*God shilde that he died sodenly.*” v. 3427; late edition. STEEVENS.

421. *We rest your hermits.*] *Hermits*, for beadsmen.

WARBURTON.

425. ———his great love, sharp as his spur,——]

So, in *Twelfth Night*, act iii. sc. 3.

“——my desire,

“*More sharp than filed steel*, did spur me forth.”

STEEVENS.

428. *Your servants ever, &c.*] The metaphor of this speech is taken from the Steward's compting-house or audit-room. *In compt*, means *subject to account*. The sense of the whole is—*We, and all who belong to us, look upon our lives and fortunes not as our own properties, but as things we have received merely for your use, and for which we must be accountable whenever you please to call us to our audit; when, like faithful stewards, we shall be ready to answer your summons, by returning you what is your own.*

STEEVENS.

436. *Enter a sewer*——] I have restored this stage direction from the old copy. The office of a *sewer* was to place the dishes in order at a feast. His chief mark of distinction was a towel round his arm. So, in Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman*; “——clap me a clean *towel* about you, like a *sewer*.” Again: “See, Sir Amorous has his *towel* on already. [He enters like a *sewer*.”]

STEEVENS.

436.

436. *If it were done, &c.]* A man of learning recommends another punctuation:

If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well.

It were done quickly, if, &c.

JOHNSON.

A sentiment parallel to this occurs in *The Proceedings against Garnet in the Powder Plot*. "It would have been commendable when it had been done, though not before."

FARMER.

437. ————*If the assassination]* If such atrocious acts did not draw after them a concatenation of circumstances, requiring as much counteraction as the deed itself, I would venture upon it, and *jump*, (*i. e.* risk) the life to come.

HENLEY.

See *Jump*, catch-word Alphabet.

439. *With his surcease, success; ————]* I think the reasoning requires that we should read:

With its success surcease. ————

JOHNSON.

A *trammel* is a net in which either birds or fishes are caught. So, in the *Isle of Gulls*, 1633:

"Each tree and shrub wears *trammels* of thy hair."

Surcease is cessation, stop. So, in *The Valiant Welchman*, 1615:

"*Surcease*, brave brother: Fortune hath crown'd our brows."

His is used instead of *its*, in many places.

STEEVENS.

441. ————*shoal of time,]* This is Theobald's emendation, undoubtedly right. The old edition has *school*, and Dr. Warburton, *shelve*.

JOHNSON.

442. *We'd jump the life to come.*——] So, in *Cymbeline*, act v. sc. 4.

“——or jump the after-inquiry on your own peril.”

STEEVENS.

I suppose the meaning to be—We would over-leap, we would make no account of the life to come. So Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*: “For the life to come, I sleep out the thought of it.”

445. ————*This even-handed justice*] Our poet, *apis Matinæ more modoque*, would stoop to borrow a sweet from any flower, however humble in its situation.

“The pricke of conscience (says Holinshed) caused him even to feare, lest he should be served of the same cup as he had minister'd to his predecessor.”

STEEVENS.

452. *Hath borne his faculties so meek,*———] *Faculties*, for office, exercise of power, &c. WARBURTON.

Hath borne his faculties so meek,———] “Duncan (says Holinshed) was soft and gentle of nature.”
—And again: “Macbeth spoke much against the king's softness, and overmuch slackness in punishing offenders.”

STEEVENS.

457. ————*or heaven's cherubin, hors'd*

Upon the sightless couriers of the air,] *Courier* is only runner. *Couriers of air* are winds, air in motion. *Sightless* is invisible.

JOHNSON.

So, in Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602, b. ii. c. 11.

“The scouring winds that sightless in the sounding air do fly.”

STEEVENS.

460. *That tears shall drown the wind.*——] Alluding to the remission of the wind in a shower.

JOHNSON.

So, in *King Henry VI.* Part III.

For raging wind blows up incessant showers,

And, when the rage allays, the *rain* begins.

460. ————no spur, &c.] The *spur of the occasion* is a phrase used by lord Bacon. STEEVENS.

———*I have no spur*

To prick the sides of my intent, but only

Vaulting ambition———]

So, in *The Tragedy of Cæsar and Pompey*, 1607:

“Why think you, lords, that ’tis *ambition’s spur*,

“That *pricketh* Cæsar to these high attempts?”

MALONE.

463. *And falls on the other*——] The word which Hanmer has on this occasion added, every reader cannot fail to add for himself. He would give:

And falls on the other side.

But the state of Macbeth’s mind is more strongly marked by this break in the speech, than by any continuation of it which the most successful critick can supply. STEEVENS.

464. *Enter Lady.*] The arguments by which Lady Macbeth persuades her husband to commit the murder, afford a proof of Shakspeare’s knowledge of human nature. She urges the excellence and dignity of courage, a glittering idea which has dazzled mankind from age to age, and animated sometimes the house-breaker, and sometimes the conqueror; but this
sophism

sophism Macbeth has for ever destroyed, by distinguishing true from false fortitude, in a line and a half; of which it may almost be said, that they ought to bestow immortality on the author, though all his other productions had been lost:

I dare do all that may become a man ;

Who dares do more, is none.

This topick, which has been always employed with too much success, is used in this scene with peculiar propriety to a soldier by a woman. Courage is the distinguishing virtue of a soldier; and the reproach of cowardice cannot be borne by any man from a woman, without great impatience.

She then urges the oaths by which he had bound himself to murder Duncan; another art of sophistry by which men have sometimes deluded their consciences, and persuaded themselves that what would be criminal in others, is virtuous in them: this argument Shakspeare, whose plan obliged him to make Macbeth yield, has not confuted, though he might easily have shewn, that a former obligation could not be vacated by a latter; that obligations, laid on us by a higher power, could not be over-ruled by obligations which we lay upon ourselves. JOHNSON.

482. *Like the poor cat i' the adage?*] The adage alluded to is, *The cat loves fish, but dares not wet her feet:*

“Catus amat pisces, sed non vult tingere plantas.”

JOHNSON.

483. *Pr'ythee, peace, &c.*] A passage similar to this occurs in *Measure for Measure*, act ii. sc. 2.

“ —————be that you are,

“ That is, a woman: if you're more, you're none.”

The folio, instead of *do more*, reads *no more*, but the present reading is undoubtedly right. STEEVENS.

The same sentiment occurs in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Rollo*:

“ My Rollo, tho' he dares as much as man,

“ Is tender of his yet untainted valour;

“ So noble, that he dares do nothing basely.”

HENLEY.

491. *Did then adhere, ———*] The old copy reads *adhere*. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Mrs. Ford says of Falstaff, that his words and actions “ no more *adhere* and keep pace together, than,” &c.

STEEVENS.

495. *I would while it was smiling in my face,*] Polyxo, in the fifth book of Statius's *Thebais*, has a similar sentiment of ferocity:

In gremio (licet amplexu lachrymisque moretur)

Transadigam ferro ———. STEEVENS.

497. ———*had I but so sworn*] *But* is an interpolation made by the editor of the second folio, who was so little acquainted with our author's metre, as to suppose this line defective. There is certainly nothing wanting. *Sworn* was used as a dissyllable.

MALONE.

501. *But screw your courage to the sticking-place,*] This

This is a metaphor from an engine formed by mechanical complication. The *sticking-place* is the *stop* which suspends its powers, till they are discharged on their proper object; as in driving piles, &c. So, in Sir W. Davenant's *Cruel Brother*, 1630:

“ ———There is an engine made,
 “ Which spends its strength by force of nimble
 wheels;
 “ For they, once *screwed up*, in their return
 “ Will rive an oak.”

Again, in *Coriolanus*, act i. sc. viii.

“ *Wrench up* thy power to the highest.”

Perhaps, indeed, Shakspeare had a more familiar image in view, and took his metaphor from the *screwing up* the chords of string-instruments to their proper degree of tension, when the peg remains fast in its *sticking-place*, i. e. in the place from which it is not to move. STEEVENS.

505. *Will I with wine and wassel so convince*] To *convince* is, in Shakspeare, to *overpower* or *subdue*, as in this play:

“ ———Their malady *convinces*

“ The great assay of art.”

JOHNSON.

So, in the old comedy of *Cambyzes*:

“ If that your heart addicted be the Egyptians to
 convince.”

Again, in Holinshed:——“ thus mortally fought, intending to vanquish and *convince* the other.”

———*and wassel*———

What was anciently called *was-haile* (as appears from Selden's

Selden's notes on the ninth song of Drayton's *Polyolbion*), was an annual custom observed in the country on the vigil of the new year; and had its beginning, as some say, from the words which Ronix, daughter of Hengist, used, when she drank to Vortigern, *loved king was-heil*; he answering her, by direction of an interpreter, *drinc-heile*; and then, as Geoffry of Monmouth says,

“ Kuste hire and sitte hire adoune and glad dronke
hire *heil*;

“ And that was tho' in his land the verst *was-hail*;

“ As in langage of Saxoyne that me might evere
iwite,

“ And so wel he paith the folc about, that he is
not yut voryute.”

Afterwards it appears that *was-haile*, and *drinc-heil*, were the usual phrases of quaffing among the English, as we may see from *Thomas de la Moore* in the *Life of Edward II.* and in the lines of Hanvil the monk, who preceded him :

“ Ecce vagante cifo distento gutture *wass-heil*,

“ Ingeminant *wass-heil*——

But Selden rather conjectures it to have been an usual ceremony among the Saxons before Hengist, as a note of *health-wishing*, supposing the expression to be corrupted from *wish-heil*.

Wassel or *Wassail* is a word still in use in the midland counties, and signifies at present what is called Lambs Wool, *i. e.* roasted apples in strong beer, with sugar and spice. See *Beggar's Bush*, act iv. sc. 4.

“ What

“ What think you of a *wassel* ?

“ —thou and Ferret

“ And Ginks to sing the song : I for the structure,

“ Which is the bowl,” &c.

Again, in a song introduced in Laneham's *Narrative of Queen Elizabeth's Entertainment at Kenelworth-Castle*, 1575:

“ For *wine and wastell* he had at will.”

Wassel is, however, sometimes used for general riot, intemperance, or festivity. On this occasion I believe it means *intemperance*.

Ben Jonson personifies *wassel* thus:—*Enter Wassel like a neat sempster and songster, her page bearing a brown bowl, drest with ribbands and rosemary, before her.*

STEEVENS.

506. —*the warder of the brain*,] A *warder* is a guard, a centinel. So, in another play of Shakspeare:

“ Where be these *warders*, that they wait not here ?”

STEEVENS.

507. —*the receipt of reason*] *i. e.* the *receptacle*.

MALONE.

508. *A limbeck only*:—] That is, shall be only a vessel to emit *fumes* or *vapours*.

JOHNSON.

512. —*who shall bear the guilt*

Of our great quell.] *Quell* is murder, *man-quellers* being in the old language the term for which *murderers* is now used.

JOHNSON.

So, in Chaucer's *Tale of the Nonnes Priest*, v. 15396, late edition.

“ The dokes cryeden as men wold hem *quelle*.”

STEEVENS.

523. —————and bend up] A metaphor from the bow. So, in *King Henry V.* act iii. sc. 1.

“ —————bend up every spirit

“ To his full height.”

STEEVENS.

ACT II.

Line 1. BANQUO.] The place is not marked in the old edition, nor is it easy to say where this encounter can be. It is not in the *hall*, as the editors have all supposed it, for Banquo sees the sky; it is not far from the bedchamber, as the conversation shews: it must be in the inner court of the castle, which Banquo might properly cross in his way to bed.

JOHNSON.

6. *Their candles are all out.*] The same expression occurs in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“ Night’s candles are burnt out.”

Again, in our author’s 21st sonnet:

“ As those gold candles fix’d in heaven’s air.”

MALONE.

8. —————Merciful powers!

Restrain in me the cursed thoughts, that nature

Gives way to in repose!—] It is apparent,

from what Banquo says afterwards, that he had been solicited in a dream to attempt something in con-

F

sequence

sequence of the prophecy of the witches, that his waking senses were shocked at; and Shakspeare has here finely contrasted his character with that of Macbeth. Banquo is praying against being tempted to encourage thoughts of guilt even in his sleep; while Macbeth is hurrying into temptation, and revolving in his mind every scheme, however flagitious, that may assist him to complete his purpose. The one is unwilling to sleep, lest the same phantoms should assail his resolution again, while the other is depriving himself of rest through impatience to commit the murder. The same kind of invocation occurs in *Cymbeline*:

“ From fairies, and the *tempters of the night*,

“ Guard me!”

STEEVENS.

14. *He hath to-night, &c.*] *To-night* was first introduced by Sir Wm. Davenant.

MALONE.

17. ———— *shut up*] *To shut up*, is to conclude. So, in the *Spanish Tragedy*:

“ And heavens have *shut up* day to pleasure us.”

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, b. iv. c. 9.

“ And for to *shut up* all in friendly love.”

Again, in Reynold's *God's Revenge against Murder*, 1621, fourth edit. p. 137: “ ————though the parents have already *shut up* the contract.” Again, in Stowe's account of the earl of Essex's speech on the scaffold: “ he *shut up* all with the Lord's prayer.” STEEVENS.

19. *Being unprepar'd,*

Our will became the servant to defect;

Which else should free have wrought.] This is
obscurely

obscurely expressed. The meaning seems to be :— Being unprepared, our entertainment was necessarily *defective*, and we only had it in our power to shew the king our *willingness* to *serve* him. Had we received sufficient notice of his coming, our zeal should have been more clearly manifested by our *acts*. Which refers not to the last antecedent (*defect*) but to *will*. MALONE.

30. *If you shall cleave to my consent when 'tis—*] Macbeth expresses his thought with affected obscurity; he does not mention the royalty, though he apparently had it in his mind. *If you shall cleave to my consent*, if you shall concur with me when I determine to accept the crown, *when 'tis*, when that happens which the prediction promises, *it shall make honour for you*. JOHNSON.

When 'tis, means, *when 'tis my leisure to talk with you on this business*; referring to what Banquo had just said, *at your kindest leisure*.

Macbeth could never mean to give Banquo at this time the most distant or obscure hint of his design upon the crown. STEEVENS.

53. *And on thy blade, and dudgeon, gouts of blood,*] *Dudgeon* properly means *the haft or handle* of a dagger, and is used for that particular sort of handle which has some ornament carved on the top of it. Junius explains the *dudgeon*, i. e. *haft*, by the Latin expression, *manubrium apiatum*, which means *a handle of wood, with a grain rough as if the seeds of parsley were strown over it*. STEEVENS.

Gascoigne confirms this : “ The most knottie piece of box may be wrought to a fayre *doogen hafte*.” *Gouts* for *drops* is frequent in old English.

FARMER.

A *gout* is still a word in daily use. *Gouts* in this passage signify the stains left by blood when it issues from a wound, and trickles down the weapon.

HENLEY.

56. ————*Now o’er the one half world*

Nature seems dead, ————] That is, over our hemisphere all actions and motion seem to have ceased. This image, which is perhaps the most striking that poetry can produce, has been adopted by Dryden in his *Conquest of Mexico* :

“ All things are hush’d as Nature’s self lay dead,

“ The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head ;

“ The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,

“ And sleeping flow’rs beneath the night dews sweat.

“ Even lust and envy sleep !”

These lines, though so well known, I have transcribed, that the contrast between them and this passage of Shakspeare may be more accurately observed.

Night is described by two great poets ; but one describes a night of quiet, the other of perturbation. In the night of Dryden, all the disturbers of the world are laid asleep ; in that of Shakspeare, nothing but sorcery, lust, and murder, is awake. He that reads Dryden finds himself lull’d with serenity, and disposed to solitude and contemplation. He that peruses Shakspeare,

Shakspeare, looks round alarmed, and starts to find himself alone. One is the night of a lover, the other, of a murderer.

JOHNSON,

59. ———wither'd murder,
 ———thus with his stealthy pace,
 With Tarquin's ravishing, sides toward his design,
 Moves like a ghost.———]

This was the reading of this passage in all the editions before that of Mr. Pope, who, for *sides*, inserted in the text *strides*, which Mr. Theobald has tacitly copied from him, though a more proper alteration might perhaps have been made. A *ravishing stride* is an action of violence, impetuosity, and tumult, like that of a savage rushing on his prey ; whereas the poet is here attempting to exhibit an image of secrecy and caution, of anxious circumspection and guilty timidity, the *stealthy pace* of a *ravisher* creeping into the chamber of a virgin, and of an assassin approaching the bed of him whom he proposes to murder, without awaking him ; these he describes as *moving like ghosts*, whose progression is so different from *strides*, that it has been in all ages represented to be as Milton expresses it :

“ Smooth sliding without step.”

This hemistich will afford the true reading of this place, which is, I think, to be corrected thus :

———and wither'd murder,
 ———thus with his stealthy pace,
 With Tarquin ravishing, slides tow'rd's his design,
 Moves likes a ghost.

Tarquin is in this place the general name of a ravisher,

F i i j

and

and the sense is: Now is the time in which every one is asleep, but those who are employed in wickedness; the witch who is sacrificing to Hecate, and the ravisher, and the murderer, who, like me, are stealing upon their prey.

When the reading is thus adjusted, he wishes with great propriety, in the following lines, that the *earth* may not *hear his steps*. JOHNSON.

The last words in this note are sufficient to confute the intent of it. Macbeth, that the earth might not hear his steps, naturally takes as few as possible, and therefore advances with *stealthy strides*, the sooner and the safer to perpetrate his purpose. Though *ravishment* itself be an act of violence, a *ravishing stride*, or the stride of a ravisher, is not; and we have Shakspeare's word that he did not think it so: for when Iachimo steals upon the sleeping Imogen, he says:

“ —————our Tarquin thus

“ Did *softly press* the rushes, ere he waken'd

“ The chastity he wounded.”

But, if the progression of Macbeth was a

“ smooth sliding *without step*,”

it was ridiculous in him to talk of the earth's hearing his *steps*, and prating of his *where-about*. HENLEY.

I cannot agree with Dr. Johnson, that a *stride* is always an *action of violence*, *impetuosity*, or *tumult*. Spenser uses the word in his *Faery Queen*, b. iv. c. 8. and with no idea of violence annexed to it:

“ With easy steps so soft as foot could *stride*.”

And

And as an additional proof that a *stride* is not always a *tumultuous effort*, the following instance, from Harrington's *Translation of Ariosto*, may be brought :

“ He takes a long and leisurable *stride*,
 “ And longest on the hinder foot he staid ;
 “ So soft he treads, altho' his steps were wide,
 “ As though to tread on eggs he was afraid.
 “ And as he goes, he gropes on either side
 “ To find the bed,” &c.

Orlando Furioso, 28th book, stanza 63.

This translation was entered on the books of the Stationers-Company, Dec. 7, 1593.

Whoever has been reduced to the necessity of finding his way about a house in the dark, must know that it is natural to take large *strides*, in order to feel before us whether we have a safe footing or not. The ravisher and murderer would naturally take such *strides*, not only on the same account, but that their steps might be fewer in number, and the sound of their feet be repeated as seldom as possible. STEEVENS.

63. ——— *Thou sound and firm-set earth*,] Though the reading of the folio is corrupt, it will direct us to the true one.

——— *Thou sowre and firm-set earth*,
 was evidently meant to be :

——— *Thou sure and firsm-set earth*,
 as I have inserted it in the text. So, in act iv. sc. 3.

“ Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis *sure*.”

STEEVENS.

64. ———*which way they walk,*——] The folio reads:

———*which they may walk,*—— STEEVENS.

65. *Thy very stones prate of my where-about,*] The following passage in a play which has been frequently mentioned, and which Langbaine says was very popular in the time of queen Elizabeth, *A Warning for faire Women*, 1599, perhaps suggested this thought:

“Mountains will not suffice to cover it,
 “Cimmerian darknesse cannot shadow it,
 “Nor any policy wit hath in store,
 “Cloake it so cunningly, but at the last,
 “If nothing else, yet will *the very stones*
 “That lie within the street, *cry out for vengeance,*
 “And point at us to be the murderers.”

MALONE.

66. *And take the present horror from the time,
 Which now suits with it.*———] *i. e.* lest the noise from the stones take away from this midnight season that present horror which suits so well with what is going to be acted in it. What was the horror he means? *Silence*, than which nothing can be more horrid to the perpetrator of an atrocious design. This shews a great knowledge of human nature.

WARBURTON.

Macbeth would have nothing break through the universal silence that added such a horror to the night, as suited well with the bloody deed he was about to perform. Mr. Burke, in his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, observes, that “all general privations are great,

great, because they are all terrible ;” and, with other things, he gives *silence* as an instance, illustrating the whole by that remarkable passage in *Virgil*, where, amidst all the images of terror that could be united, the circumstance of *silence* is particularly dwelt upon :

“ Dii quibus imperium est animarum, umbræque
silentes,

“ Et Chaos et Phlegethon, loca nocte *silentia*
latè.”

When Statius, in the Vth book of the *Thebaid*, describes the Lemnian massacre, his frequent notice of the silence and solitude after the deed, is striking in a wonderful degree :

“ Conticuere domus,” &c. STEEVENS.

17. —————their possets,] It appears from this passage, as well as from many others in our old dramattick performances, that it was the general custom to eat *possets* just before bed-time. So, in the first part of *K. Edward IV.* by Heywood ; “——thou shalt be welcome to beef and bacon, and perhaps a bag-pudding ; and my daughter Nell shall pop a *posset* upon thee when thou goest to bed.” Macbeth himself has already said :

“ Go, bid thy mistress, when my *drink* is ready,
“ She strike upon the bell.”

And, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Mrs. Quickly promises Jack Rugby a *posset* at night.” STEEVENS.

83. *Hark ! I laid the daggers ready,*

He could not miss them——] Compare Euripides, *Orestes*, v. 1291,—where Electra stands centinel at the
door

door of the palace whilst Orestes is within for the purpose of murdering Helen. The dread of a surprise and eagerness for the business, makes Electra conclude that the deed must be done ere time enough had elapsed for attempting it. She listens with anxious impatience, and hearing nothing, expresses strong fears lest the daggers should have failed. Read the whole passage. S. W.

84. ——— *Had he not resembled*

My father as he slept, I had don't——] This is very artful. For, as the poet had drawn the lady and her husband, it would be thought the act should have been done by her. It is likewise highly just; for though ambition had subdued in her all the sentiments of nature towards *present* objects, yet the likeness of one *past*, which she had been accustomed to regard with reverence, made her unnatural passions, for a moment, give way to the sentiments of instinct and humanity. WARBURTON.

The same circumstance, on a similar occasion, is introduced by Statius in the Vth book of his *Thebaid*, ver. 236.

“ Ut verò Alcimedem etiamnum in murmure
truncos

“ *Ferre patris vultus, et egentem sanguinis ensem*

“ *Conspexi riguere comæ, atque in viscera sævus*

“ *Horror ut Meus ille Thoas mea dira videri*

“ *Dextra mihi. Extemplo thalamis turbata
paternis*

“ *Inferor.*———

Thoas

Thoas was the father of Hypsipyle the speaker.

STEEVENS.

95. *This is a sorry sight,*] This expression might have been borrowed from *Spenser's Faery Queen*, l. v. c. i. 14.

A sorrie sight as ever seene with eye. WHALLEY.

104. Listening *their fear*. *I could not say, amen,*
When they did say, God bless us.] i. e. *Listening to their fear*, the particle omitted This is common in our author. *Julius Cæsar*, act iv. sc. i.

“ ———— and now Octavius,

“ *Listen* great things.”

Contemporary writers took the same liberty. So, in *The World toss'd at Tennis*, by Middleton and Rowley, 1620 :

“ *Listen* the complaints of thy poor votaries.”

Again, in Lyly's *Maid's Metamorphosis*, 1600 :

“ There, in rich seats, all wrought of ivory,

“ The Graces sit, *listening* the melody

“ Of warbling birds.”

STEEVENS.

114. *Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,*] To confirm the ingenious conjecture that *sleeve* means *sleaved*, *silk ravell'd*, it is observable, that a poet of Shakspeare's age, Drayton, has alluded to it likewise in his *Quest of Cynthia* :

“ At length I on a fountain light,

“ Whose brim with pinks was platted,

“ The banks with daffadillies dight,

“ With grass, like *sleeve*, was matted.”

LANGTON.

Sleeve

Sleave is mentioned in Holinshed's *History of England*, p. 835: "Eight wild men all apparelled in green moss made with *sleved* silk." Perhaps the same word, though differently spelt, occurs in the *Lover's Complaint*, by Shakspeare, p. 87, and 88, Lintot's.

"Found yet mo letters sadly penn'd in blood,

"With *sleided* silke, feate and affectedly

"Enswath'd and sealed to curious secrecy."

STEEVENS.

To *sleive* is a provincial expression derived from the Teutonick *schleiffen*, to trail on the ground. That something of this idea was included in Shakspeare's sense of *sleave*, is evident from the application of *knits up* to it.

HENLEY.

115. *The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath, &c.*] In this encomium upon sleep, amongst the many appellations which are given it, significant of its beneficence and friendliness to life, we find one which conveys a different idea, and by no means agrees with the rest, which is:

The death of each day's life,———]

I make no question but Shakspeare wrote:

The birth of each day's life,——

The true characteristick of sleep, which repairs the decays of labour, and assists that returning vigour which supplies the next day's activity. The player-editors seem to have corrupted it for the sake of a silly jingle between *life* and *death*.
WARBURTON.

I neither perceive the corruption, nor any necessity for alteration. *The death of each day's life*, means the
end

end of each day's labour, the conclusion of all that bustle and fatigue that each day's life brings with it.

STEEVENS.

115. *Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds,———]* Is it not pro-

bable that Shakspeare remembered the following verse in Sir Philip Sydney's *Astrophel and Stella*, a poem from which he has quoted a line in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*:

“Come sleepe, O sleepe, the certain knot of
peace,

“The *bathing* place of wits, the *balm* of woe,

“The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,

“The indifferent judge between the high and
low.”

The late Mr. Gray had, perhaps, our author's “*death of each day's life*” in his thoughts, when he wrote

“The curfew tolls the *knell* of parting day.”

MALONE.

117. *Chief nourisher in life's feast;]* So, in Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*, v. 10661 : late edit.

“The *norice* of digestion, the *slepe*.”

STEEVENS.

134. ——'tis the eye of childhood,

That fears a painted devil———] So, in *Vittoria Corombona*, 1612 :

“Terrify babes, my lord, with *painted devils*.”

STEEVENS.

136. ———*gild the faces of the grooms withal,*
For it must seem their guilt.] Could Shakspeare
 possibly mean to play upon the similitude of *gild* and
guilt? JOHNSON.

This quibble very frequently occurs in the old plays.
 A few instances (for I could produce a dozen at least)
 may suffice :

“*Cand.* You have a silver beaker of my wife’s ?

“*Flu.* You say not true, ’tis *gilt*.”

“*Cand.* Then you say true :——

“ And being *gilt*, the *guilt* lies more on you.”

Again, in Middleton’s comedy of *A mad World my Masters*, 1608 :

“ Though *guilt* condemns, ’tis *gilt* must make us
 glad.”

And, lastly, from Shakspeare himself :

“ England shall double *gild* his treble *guilt*.”

Henry IV. part ii.

STEEVENS.

143. ———*incarnardine*,] To *incarnardine*, is to
 stain any thing of a flesh colour, or red. *Carnardine*
 is the old term for *carnation*. So, in a comedy called
Any Thing for a quiet Life :

“ Grograms, sattins, velvet fine,

“ The rosy-colour’d *carnardine*.” STEEVENS.

144. *Making the green—one red.*] The same
 thought occurs in *The Downfal of Robert Earl of Hun-*
tingdon, 1601 :

“ The *multitudes* of seas died red with blood.”

Again, in the 19th song of Drayton’s *Polyolbion* :

“ And the vast *greenish* sea discolour’d like to blood.”

It

It has been common to read :

Making the green one, red.

The author of the *Gray's-Inn Journal*, No. 15, first made this elegant and necessary change, which has hitherto been adopted without acknowledgment.

STEEVENS.

145. *My hands are of your colour,———*] A similar antithesis is found in Marlowe's *Lust's Dominion*, 1657 :

“Your cheeks are black, let not your *souls* look
white.”

MALONE.

154. *To know my deed—'Twere best not know myself.*] *i. e.* While I have *the thoughts* of this deed, it were best not know, or *be lost* to, myself. This is an answer to the lady's reproof:

———be not lost

So poorly in your thoughts.

WARBURTON.

162. *———napkins enough——*] *i. e.* handkerchiefs.

STEEVENS.

165. *——here's an equivocator—who committed treason enough for God's sake——*] Meaning a jesuit: an order so troublesome to the state in queen Elizabeth and king James the first's time. The inventors of the execrable doctrine of *equivocation*.

WARBURTON.

169. *——here's an English Taylor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose:——*] In the *Treasury of ancient and modern Times*, 1613, we have an account (from Guyon, I suppose) of the old French dresses; “Men's hose answered in length to their short-skirted doublets; being made *close to their limbes*, wherein they had no meanes for pockets. And *Withers*, in his

satire against vanity, ridicules “the spruze, *diminutive*, neat, *Frenchman’s hose*.” FARMER.

198. ———*I made a shift to cast him.*] To cast him up, to ease my stomach of him. The equivocation is between *cast* or *throw*, as a term of wrestling, and *cast* or *cast up*. JOHNSON.

I find the same play upon words, in an old comedy, entitled *The Two angry Women of Abington*, printed 1599 :

—————“to-night he’s a good huswife, he reels all that he wrought to-day, and he were good now to play at dice, for he *casts* excellent well.” STEEVENS.

213. *For ’tis my limited service*] *Limited*, for appointed. WARBURTON.

227. —————*Tongue, nor heart,*] The use of two negatives, not to make an affirmative, but to deny more strongly, is very common in our author. So *Julius Caesar*, act iii. sc. 1.

“—————there is no harm

“Intended to your person, *nor* to *no* Roman else.” STEEVENS.

245. —————*this horror!*] Here the old edition adds, *ring the bell*, which Theobald rejected, as a direction to the players. He has been followed by Dr. Warburton and Dr. Johnson. Shakspeare might think a repetition of the command to ring the bell necessary, and I know not how an editor is authorised to reject that which apparently makes a part of his author’s text. STEEVENS.

The

The subsequent hemistich—"What's the business?"—which completes the metre of the preceding line, without the words "Ring the bell," affords, in my opinion, a strong presumptive proof that these words were only a marginal direction. It should be remembered that all the stage-directions were formerly couched in imperative terms:—"Draw a knife;"—"Play musick;"—"Ring the bell," &c.

I suppose it was in consequence of an imperfect recollection of this hemistich, that Mr. Pope, having in his preface charged the editors of the first folio with introducing stage-directions into their author's text, in support of his assertion quotes the following line:

"My queen is murder'd:—*ring the little bell.*"

A line that is not found in any edition of these plays, nor, I believe, in any other book. MALONE.

255. *What, in our house!*] This is very fine. Had she been innocent, nothing but the murder itself, and not any of its aggravating circumstances, would naturally have affected her. As it was, her business was to appear highly disordered at the news. Therefore, like one who has her thoughts about her, she seeks for an aggravating circumstance, that might be supposed most to affect her personally; not considering, that by placing it there, she discovered rather a concern for herself than for the king. On the contrary, her husband, who had repented the act, and was now labouring under the horrors of a recent murder, in his exclamation, gives all the marks of sorrow for the fact itself. WARBURTON.

272. ———badg'd *with blood*,] So, in the Second Part of *K. Henry VI.*

“With murder’s crimson *badge*.” MALONE.

273. ———*their daggers, which unwip’d we found upon their pillows.*] This idea, perhaps, was taken from *The Man of Lawes Tale*, by Chaucer, l. 5027, Tyrwhitt’s edit.

“And in the bed the bloody knife he found.”

See also the foregoing lines. STEEVENS.

282. ———*Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin lac’d with his golden blood;
And his gash’d stabs look’d like a breach in
nature,*

For ruin’s wasteful entrance :———] It is not improbable, that Shakspeare put these forced and unnatural metaphors into the mouth of Macbeth as a mark of artifice and dissimulation, to shew the difference between the studied language of hypocrisy, and the natural outcries of sudden passion. The whole speech, so considered, is a remarkable instance of judgment, as it consists entirely of antithesis and metaphor. JOHNSON.

To *gild* any thing *with blood*, is a very common phrase in the old plays. So Heywood, in the second part of his *Iron Age*, 1632 :

“———we have *gilt* our Greekish arms

“*With blood* of our own nation.”

Shakspeare repeats the image in *K. John* :

“Their armours that march’d hence so *silver*
bright,

“Hither



“Hither return all *gilt* with Frenchmen’s *blood*.”

STEEVENS.

284. ———a *breach* in nature

For ruin’s wasteful entrance:] This comparison occurs likewise in *A. Herring’s Tayle*, a poem, 1598.

“A batter’d *breach* where troopes of wounds may enter in.

STEEVENS.

287. *Unmannerly breech’d with gore;———]* Macbeth is describing a scene shocking to humanity: and in the midst of his narrative throws in a parenthetical reflection, consisting of one word not connected with the sentence, (“O most *unseemly* sight!”) For this is a meaning of the word *unmannerly*: and the want of considering it in this *detached* sense has introduced much confusion into the passage. The Latins often used *nefas* and *infandum* in this manner. Or, in the same sense, the word may be here applied adverbially. The correction of the author of the Revisal is equally frigid and unmeaning. “Their daggers *in a manner lay drench’d* with gore.” The manifest artifice and dissimulation of the speech seems to be heightened by the explanation which I have offered. WARTON.

I apprehend it to be the duty of an editor to represent his author such as he is, and explain the meaning of the words he finds to the best advantage, instead of attempting to make them better by any violent alteration.

The expression may mean, that the daggers were covered with blood, quite to their *breeches*, *i. e.* their
hilt

hilts or *handles*. The lower end of a cannon is called the *breech* of it; and it is known that both to *breech* and to *unbreech* a gun are common terms. So, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Custom of the Country*:

“The main spring's weaken'd that holds up his
cock,

“He lies to be new *breech'd*.

“*Unbreech* his barrel, and discharge his bullets.”

STEEVENS.

A passage in a preceding scene, in which Macbeth's visionary dagger is described, strongly supports Mr. Steevens's interpretation.

“——— I see thee still;

“And on thy blade and *dudgeon* [i. e. *hilt*] gouts
of blood,

“Which was not so before.”

The following lines in *K. Henry IV. Part III.* may perhaps, after all, form the best comment on these controverted words:

“And full as oft came Edward to my side,

“With purple faulchion, *painted to the hilt*

“*In blood* of those that had encounter'd him.”

Though much has been written on this passage, the commentators have forgotten to account for the attendants of Duncan being furnished with these unmannerly daggers. The fact is, that in our author's time a dagger was a common weapon, and was usually carried by servants, suspended at their backs. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*: “Then I will lay the *serving creature's dagger* on your pate.”

MALONE.

This

This passage, says Mr. Heath, seems to have been the *crux criticorum*!—Every one has tried his skill at it, and I may venture to say, no one has succeeded.

The sense is, in plain language, *Daggers filthily—in a foul manner—sheath'd with blood.* A scabbard is called a *pilche*, a leather coat, in *Romeo*——but you will ask, whence the allusion to *breeches*? Dr. Warburton and Dr. Johnson have well observed, that this speech of Macbeth is very artfully made of unnatural thoughts and language: in 1605 (the year in which the play appears to have been written) a book was published by Peter Erondell (with commendatory poems by Daniel, and other wits of the time), called *The French Garden, or A Summer Dayes Labour*, containing, among other matters, some dialogues of a dramattick cast, which, I am persuaded, our author had read in the English; and from which he took, as he supposed, for his present purpose, this quaint expression. I will quote *literatim* from the 6th dialogue: “Boy! you do nothing but play tricks there, go fetch your master’s silver-hatched daggers, you have not brushed their *breeches*; bring the brushes, and brush them before me.”—Shakspeare was deceived by the pointing, and evidently supposes *breeches* to be a new and affected term for *scabbards*. But had he been able to have read the French on the other page, even as a *learner*, he must have been set right at once. “Garçon, vous ne faites que badiner, allez querir les poignards argentés de vos maistres, vous n’avez pas espousséré leur *haut-de-chausses*”—their *breeches*, in the common sense

sense of the word: as in the next sentence *bas-de-chausses*, stockings, and so on through all the articles of dress.

FARMER.

295. *Where our fate, hid within an augre-hole.]*
The old copy reads—hid in.

MALONE.

301. *And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure,———]* i. e. *when we have clothed our half-drest bodies, which may take cold from being exposed to the air.* It is possible that in such a cloud of words, the meaning might escape the reader.

STEEVENS.

305. *In the great hand of God I stand; and, thence,
Against the undivulg'd pretence I fight
Of treasonous malice.]* Pretence is intention, design, a sense in which the word is often used by Shakspeare. So, in *The Winter's Tale*: “——conspiring with Camillo to take away the life of our sovereign lord the king, thy royal husband, the *pretence* whereof being by circumstance partly laid open.” Again, in this tragedy of *Macbeth*:

“What good could they *pretend*?”

i. e. intend to themselves. Banquo's meaning is—in our present state of doubt and uncertainty about this murder, I have nothing to do but to put myself under the direction of God; and relying on his support, I here declare myself an eternal enemy to this treason, and to all its *further designs that have not yet come to light.*

STEEVENS.

318. —— *the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.]* Meaning, that he suspected
Macbeth

Macbeth to be the murderer ; for he was the *nearest in blood* to the two princes, being the cousin-german of Duncan.

STEEVENS.

320. *This murderous shaft that's shot,*

Hath not yet lighted ;——] *The shaft is not yet lighted, and though it has done mischief in its flight, we have reason to apprehend still more before it has spent its force and falls to the ground.* The end for which the murder was committed is not yet attained. The death of the king only could neither insure the crown to Macbeth, nor accomplish any other purpose, while his sons were yet living, who had therefore just reason to apprehend they should be removed by the same means.

Such another thought occurs in *Bussey D'Ambois*, 1606 :

“ The chain-shot of thy lust is yet aloft,

“ And it must murder,” &c.

STEEVENS.

339. *——— in her pride of place,]* Finely expressed, for *confidence in its quality.* WARBURTON.

This is found among the prodigies consequent on king Duffe's murder: “ There was a *sparhawk* strangled by an owl.”

STEEVENS.

342. *——— minions of their race,]* Theobald reads :

——— minions of the race,

very probably, and very poetical.

JOHNSON.

Their is probably the true reading, the same expression being found in *Romeus and Juliet*, 1562, a poem which Shakspeare had certainly read :

“ There

“ There were two ancient stocks, which Fortune
high did place

“ Above the rest, endew'd with wealth, the
nobler *of their race*.” MALONE.

Most of the prodigies just before mentioned are related by Holinshed, as accompanying king Duffe's death; and it is in particular asserted, *that horses of singular beauty and swiftness did eat their own flesh*. Macbeth's killing Duncan's chamberlains is taken from Donwald's killing those of king Duffe.

STEEVENS.

354. *What good could they pretend?*] To pretend, in this instance, as in many others, is simply to *design*.

STEEVENS.

See catch-word Alphabet.

361. *Then 'tis most like,*

The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.] Macbeth, by his birth, stood next in the succession to the crown, immediately after the sons of Duncan. King Malcolm, Duncan's predecessor, had two daughters, the eldest of whom was the mother of Duncan, the youngest, the mother of Macbeth. *Holinshed*.

STEEVENS.

366. — *Colmes-kill*;) *Colmes-hill*, or *Colm-kill*, is the famous *Iona*, one of the western isles, which Dr. Johnson visited, and describes in his Tour. Holinshed scarcely mentions the death of any of the ancient kings of Scotland, without taking notice of their being buried with their predecessors in *Colmes-kill*.

Colmes-*hill* is one of the numerous corruptions of the second folio, in a former scene of this play. *Kill* is the true word, and in the Erse language signifies a burying-place. MALONE.

ACT III.

Line 7. *AS* upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine] Shine, for prosper. WARBURTON.

Shine, for appear with all the lustre of conspicuous truth. JOHNSON.

I rather incline to Dr. Warburton's interpretation. So, in *K. Henry VI.* Part I:

“Heaven, and our lady gracious, hath it pleased
“To *shine* on my contemptible estate.”

STEEVENS.

17. *Lay your—*] The folio reads, *Let your—*

STEEVENS.

The change was suggested by Sir W. Davenant's alteration of this play: it was made by Mr. Rowe.

MALONE.

28. *Go not my horse the better,*] *i. e.* if he does not go well. Shakspeare often uses the *comparative* for the *positive* and *superlative*. So, in *K. Lear*:

“——her smiles and tears

“Were like a better day.”

Again, in *Macbeth*:

“——it hath cow'd my *better* part of man.”

Again, in P. Holland's translation of Pliny's *Natural History*,

History, b. ix. c. 46. “——Many are caught out of their fellowes hands, if they bestirre not themselves the *better*.” It may mean, If my horse does not go the better for the haste I shall be in to avoid the night.

STEEVENS.

The expression is rather elliptical, than ungrammatical.

HENLEY.

67. *For Banquo's issue have I fil'd my mind ;*] We should read :

————'filed *my mind* ;

i. e. defiled.

WARBURTON.

This mark of contraction is not necessary. To *file* is in the bishop's *Bible*.

JOHNSON.

So, in the *Revenger's Tragedy*, 1608 :

“ He called his father villain, and me strumpet,

“ A name I do abhor to *file* my lips with.”

Again, in the *Miseries of inforc'd Marriage*, 1607 :

“ ——like smoke through a chimney that *files* all the way it goes.” Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, b. iii. c. 1 :

“ She lightly lept out of her *filed* bed.”

STEEVENS.

71. ——*the common enemy of man*,] It is always an entertainment to an inquisitive reader, to trace a sentiment to its original source ; and therefore, though the term *enemy of man*, applied to the devil, is in-itself natural and obvious, yet some may be pleased with being informed, that Shakspeare probably borrowed it from the first lines of the *Destruction of Troy*, a book which he is known to have read. This expression,

sion, however, he might have had in many other places. The word *fiend* signifies enemy. JOHNSON.

73. ———come, fate, into the list,

And champion me to the utterance!——] We meet with the same expression in Gawin Douglas's translation of *Virgil*, p. 331. 349:

“That war not put by Greikis to utterance.”

Again, in the *History of Graund Amoure and la belle Pucelle*, &c. by Stephen Hawes, 1555:

“That so many monsters put to utteraunce.”

Shakspeare uses it again in *Cymbeline*, act iii. line 78.

STEEVENS.

83. ———past in probation with you;

How you were borne in hand, &c.] *i. e.* past in proving to you, how you were, &c. So, in *Othello*:

“—————so prove it,

“That the probation bear no hinge or loop

“To hang a doubt on.”

A comma therefore should seem more proper than a semicolon at the end of this line. MALONE.

84. How you were borne in hand;——] *i. e.* made to believe what was not true, what would never happen or be made good to you. In this sense Chaucer uses it, *Wife of Bath's Prol.* p. 78. l. 2. 32.

“A wise wife shall, &c.

“Berin them in honde that the cove is wode.”

And our author in many places, see *Measure for Measure*, act i. line 395. WARNER.

92 ———Are you so gospell'd,] I believe that *gospell'd* means, kept in obedience to that precept of

Hij

the

the gospel, “to pray for those that despitefully use us.” STEEVENS.

96. *We are men, my liege.*] That is, we have the same feelings as the rest of mankind, and, *as men*, are not without a *manly resentment* for the wrongs which we have suffered, and which you have now recited.

MALONE.

99. *Shoughs*,—] *Shoughs* are probably what we now call *shocks*, demi-wolves, *lyciscæ*; dogs bred between wolves and dogs. JOHNSON.

This species of dogs is mentioned in Nash’s *Lenten Stuffe*, &c. 1599: “——a trundle-tail, tike, or *shough* or two.” STEEVENS.

100. ——*the valued file*] Is the file or list where the value and peculiar qualities of every thing is set down, in contradistinction to what he immediately mentions, *the bill that writes them all alike*. *File*, in the second instance, is used in the same sense as in this, and with a reference to it.—*Now, if you belong to any class that deserves a place in the valued file of man, and are not of the lowest rank, the common herd of mankind, that are not worth distinguishing from each other.*

File and *list* are synonymous, as in the last act of this play:

“——I have a *file*

“Of all the gentry.”

Again, in Heywood’s dedication to the second part of his *Iron Age*, 1632: “——to number you in the *file* and *list* of my best and choicest well-wishers.”

Shakspeare likewise has it in *Measure for Measure*:

“The

“The greater *file* of the subject held the duke to be wise.” In short, the *valued file* is the catalogue with prices annexed to it. STEEVENS.

119. *So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,*
Tugg'd with fortune may be, *tugg'd* or *worried* by fortune. JOHNSON.

125. ——— *in such bloody distance,*] By *bloody distance* is here meant, such a distance as mortal enemies would stand at from each other when their quarrel must be determined by the sword. This sense seems evident from the continuation of the metaphor, where *every minute of his being* is represented as *thrusting at the nearest part where life resides*. STEEVENS.

141. *Acquaint you with the perfect spy o'the time,*
 What is meant by *the spy of the time*, it will be found difficult to explain; and therefore sense will be cheaply gained by a slight alteration.——Macbeth is assuring the assassins that they shall not want directions to find Banquo, and therefore says:

I will——

Acquaint you with a perfect spy o'the time.

Accordingly a third murderer joins them afterwards at the place of action.

Perfect is *well instructed*, or *well informed*, as in this play:

“Though in your state of honour I am *perfect*.”
 though I am *well acquainted* with your quality and rank. JOHNSON.

——— *the perfect spy o'the time,*
i. e. the critical juncture.

WARBURTON.

H i i j

How

How the *critical juncture* is the *spy o'the time*, I know not, but I think my own conjecture right. JOHNSON.

The perfect spy of the time seems to be, *the exact time, which shall be spied and watched for the purpose.*

STEEVENS.

The meaning, I think, is, *I will acquaint you with the time when you may look out for Banquo's coming with the most perfect assurance of not being disappointed; and not only with the time in general, but with the very moment when you may expect him.*

MALONE.

Macbeth appears to have sent a messenger after Banquo to watch his motions, and when he saw him take horse for his return, to out-ride him and bring home the information. This *perfect spy of the time* was the *third murderer*, who, on the instant of his arrival, was sent to the other two, to apprize them of the *moment* they might look for Banquo. See the beginning of scene 3.

HENLEY.

143. ———always thought,

That I require a clearness:] i. e. you must manage matters so, that throughout the whole transaction I may stand clear of suspicion. So, Holinshed: “——appointing them to meet Banquo and his sonne *without the palace*, as they returned to their lodgings, and there to slea them, so that he would not have his house slandered, but that in time to come he might *cleare* himself.”

STEEVENS.

169. —scotch'd—] Mr. Theobald.—Fol. *scorch'd*.

JOHNSON.

Scotch'd is the true reading. So, in *Coriolanus*, act iv. scene 5 :

“——he

“——he *scotch'd* him and notch'd him like a carbonado.” STEEVENS.

176. *Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace.*]

The old copy reads :

Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace.

This change, which appears to be necessary, was made in the second folio. STEEVENS.

The old reading I think should be preserved. The play on the word is like those already put into the mouth of Macbeth. HENLEY.

178. *In restless ecstasy*———] *Ecstasy*, in its general sense, signifies any violent emotion of the mind. Here it means the emotions of pain, agony. So, in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, p. 1.

“Griping our bowels with retorqued thoughts,

“And have no hope to end our *extasies*.”

STEEVENS.

188. ——*present him eminence*,———] *i. e.* do him the highest honours. WARBURTON.

196. ——*nature's copy's not eterne*.] The *copy*, the *lease*, by which they hold their lives from nature, has its time of termination limited. JOHNSON.

Eterne for *eternal* is often used by Chaucer. So, in the *Knight's Tale*, late edit. v. 1305 :

“——O cruel goddes, that governe

“This world with binding of your word *eterne*,

“And written in the table of athamant

“Your parlement and your *eterne* grant.”

STEEVENS.

Dr. Johnson's interpretation is supported by a subsequent passage in this play.

“——and

“——and our high-plac'd Macbeth

“ Shall live the *lease of Nature*, pay his breath

“ To time and mortal custom.”

200. *The shard-borne beetle,——*] *i. e.* the beetle hatched in clefts of wood. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ They are his *shards*, and he their *beetle*.”

WARBURTON.

The *shard-borne* beetle is not only the ancient but the true reading: *i. e.* the beetle borne along the air by its *shards* or *scaly wings*. From a passage in Gower *De Confessione Amantis*, it appears that *shards* signified *scales*:

“ She sigh, her thought, a dragon tho,

“ Whose *scherdes* shynen as the sonne.”

And hence the upper or outward wings of the beetle were called *shards*, they being of a *scaly* substance. To have an outward pair of wings of a *scaly* hardness, serving as integuments, to a *filmy* pair beneath them, is the characteristick of the beetle kind.

Ben Jonson, in his *Sad Shepherd*, says:

“ The *scaly* beetles with their *habergeons*,

“ That make a humming murmur as they fly.”

In *Cymbeline*, Shakspeare applies this epithet again to the beetle:

“ ————— we find

“ The *sharded* beetle in a safer hold

“ Than is the full-wing'd eagle.”

Here there is a manifest opposition intended between the wings and flight of the *insect* and the *bird*. The beetle, whose *sharded wings* can but just raise him above
the

the ground, is often in a state of greater *security* than the *vast-winged eagle* that can soar to any height.

As Shakspeare is here describing the *beetle* in the act of flying (for he never makes his humming noise but when he flies), it is more natural to suppose the epithet should allude to the peculiarity of his wings, than to the circumstance of his origin, or his place of habitation, both of which are common to him with several other creatures of the insect kind.

The quotation from *Antony and Cleopatra*, seems to make against Dr. Warburton's explanation.

The meaning of *Ænobarbus* in that passage is evidently this: Lepidus, says he, is the *beetle* of the triumvirate, a dull, blind creature, that would but crawl on the earth, if Octavius and Antony, his more active colleagues in power, did not serve him for *shards* or wings to raise him a little above the ground.

What idea is afforded, if we say that Octavius and Antony are two clefts in the old wood in which Lepidus was hatch'd?

STEEVENS.

204. ———*dearest* chuck,] I meet with this term of endearment (which is probably corrupted from *chick* or *chicken*) in many of our ancient writers. So, in Warner's *Albion's England*, b. v. c. 27.

“ ———immortal she-egg *chuck* of Tyndarus his wife.”

STEEVENS.

205. ———*Come* sealing *night*,] Thus the common editions had it; but the old one, *seeling*, i. e. blinding; which is right. It is a term in falconry.

WARBURTON.

So,

So, in the *Booke of Hawkyng, Huntyng, &c.* bl. let. no date: “And he must take wyth hym nedle and threde, to *ensyle* the haukes that bene taken. And in thys maner the must be *ensiled*. Take the nedel and thryde, and put it through the over eye lyd, and soe of that other, and make them fast under the beeke that she se not,” &c. STEEVENS.

———Come, seeling night,

Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond

Which keeps me pale!——] This may be well explained by the following passage in *Richard III.*

“Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I pray.”

Again, in *Cymbeline*, act v. sc. 4.

“———take this life,

“And cancel these cold bonds.” STEEVENS.

209. Light thickens; *and the crow*] By the expression, *light thickens*, Shakspeare means, *the light grows dull or muddy*. In this sense he uses it in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“———my lustre thickens

“When he shines by”——

EDWARDS'S MSS.

It may be added, that in the second part of *King Henry IV.* Prince John of Lancaster tells Falstaff, that “his desert is *too thick to shine*.” STEEVENS.

210. *Makes wing to the rooky wood*:] *Rooky* may mean *damp, misty, steaming with exhalations*. It is only a North country variation of dialect from *reeky*. In *Coriolanus*, Shakspeare mentions

“———the *reck* of th' rotten fens.”

And,

And, in *Caltha Poëtarum*, &c. 1599 :

“ Comes in a vapour like a *rookish* ryme.”

Rooky wood may, however, signify a *rookery*, the wood that abounds with rooks. STEEVENS.

216. *But who did bid thee join with us?*] The meaning of this abrupt dialogue is this : The *perfect spy*, mentioned by Macbeth in the foregoing scene, has, before they enter upon the stage, given them the directions which were promised at the time of their agreement ; yet one of the murderers suborned, suspects him of intending to betray them ; the other observes, that, by his exact knowledge of *what they were to do*, he appears to be employed by Macbeth, and needs not be mistrusted. JOHNSON.

229. ———*the note of expectation,*] *i. e.* they who are set down in the list of guests, and expected to supper. STEEVENS.

243. *Was't not the way?*] *i. e.* the best means we could take to evade discovery. STEEVENS.

247. *You know your own degrees, sit down : at first And last, the hearty welcome.*] As this passage stands, not only the numbers are very imperfect ; but the sense, if any can be found, weak and contemptible. The numbers will be improved by reading :

—————*sit down at first,*

And last a hearty welcome.

But for *last* should then be written *next*. I believe the true reading is :

You know your own degrees, sit down.—To first

And last the hearty welcome.

All of whatever degree, from the highest to the lowest, may be assured that their visit is well received.

JOHNSON.

252. *Our hostess keeps her state, &c.*] This idea might have been borrowed from Holinshed, p. 108: “The king (Hen. VIII.) caused the queene to *keepe the estate*, and then sat the ambassadours and ladies as they were marshalled by the king, who would not sit, but walked from place to place, making cheer,” &c.

STEEVENS.

A *state* appears to have been a royal chair with a canopy over it. So, in *K. Henry IV. Part I.*

“This *chair* shall be my *state*.”

Again, in Sir Thomas Herbert’s *Memoirs of Charles I.* “Where being set, the king *under a state* at the end of the room.”——Again, in *The View of France, 1598*: “Espying the *chayre* not to stand well under the *state*, he mended it handsomely himself.” MALONE.

261. *’Tis better thee without, than he within.*] The sense requires that this passage should be read thus:

’Tis better thee without, than him within.

That is, *I am better pleased that the blood of Banquo should be on thy face than in thy body.*

The author might mean, *It is better that Banquo’s blood were on thy face, than he in this room.* Expressions thus imperfect are common in his works.

JOHNSON.

This is another play on a word, and serves to mark the state of Macbeth’s mind. * * *

275. ———trenched *gashes*———] *Trancher* to cut. Fr. STEEVENS.

283. ————*the feast is sold, &c.*] The same expression occurs in the *Romaunt of the Rose*:

“ Good dede done through praierre,

“ *Is sold, and bought to dere.*”

STEEVENS.

It is still common to say, that we *pay dear* for an entertainment, if the circumstances attending the participation of it prove irksome to us. HENLEY.

288. *Enter the ghost of Banquo,——*] This circumstance of *Banquo's ghost* seems to be alluded to in *The Puritan*, first printed in 1607, and ridiculously ascribed to Shakspeare: “ We'll ha' the *ghost* i' th' white sheet sit at *upper end o' th' table.*” FARMER.

312. ————*extend his passion* ;] Prolong his suffering ; make his fit longer. JOHNSON.

319. ————*Oh, these flaws and starts*
(Impostors to true fear) *would well become*
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authoriz'd by her grandam.——] *Flaws are sudden gusts.* The author perhaps wrote :

———*Those flaws and starts,*

Impostures true to fear would well become ;

A woman's story,——

These symptoms of terror and amazement might better become *impostures true only to fear, might become a coward at the recital of such falsehoods as no man could credit, whose understanding was not weakened by his terrors ; tales told by a woman over a fire on the authority of her grandam.* JOHNSON.

329. *Shall be the maws of kites.*] The same thought occurs in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, b. ii. c. 8.

“ But be *entombed* in the raven or the *hight*.”

STEEVENS.

334. *Ere human statute purg'd the gentle weal ;*] The *gentle weal*, is, the *peaceable community*, the state made quiet and safe by *human statutes*.

“ *Mollia securæ peragebant otia gentes.*”

JOHNSON.

345. *Do not muse at me,———*] To muse anciently signified to be in *amaze*. STEEVENS.

352. *And all to all.*] *i. e.* all good wishes to all : such as he named above, *love, health, and joy*.

WARBURTON.

Timon uses nearly the same expression to his guests, act i. “ *All to you.*” STEEVENS.

363. *The Hyrcan tyger,*] Theobald chooses to read, in opposition to the old copy :—*Hyrceanian tyger* ; but the alteration was unnecessary, as Dr. Philemon Holland, in his translation of Pliny's *Nat. Hist.* p. 122, mentions the *Hyrcale* sea. TOLLET.

367. *If trembling I inhabit,———*] This is the original reading, which Mr. Pope changed to *inhibit*, which *inhibit* Dr. Warburton interprets *refuse*. The old reading may stand, at least as well as the emendation. Suppose we read :

If trembling I evade it.

JOHNSON.

Inhibit seems more likely to have been the poet's own word, as he uses it frequently in the sense required in this passage. *Othello*, act i. sc. 7.

“——a practiser

“Of arts *inhibited*.”

Hamlet, act ii. scene 6.

“I think their *inhibition* comes of the late innovation.”

To *inhibit* is to *forbid*. The poet might probably have written :

If trembling I inhibit thee, protest me, &c.

STEEVENS.

I have no doubt that “*inhibit thee*,”——is the true reading. In *All's Well that Ends Well*, we find in the second and all the subsequent folios——“which is the most *inhabited* sin of the canon.”——instead of *inhibited*.

In our author's *King Richard II.* we have nearly the same thought :

“If I dare eat, or drink, or breathe, or live,

“*I dare meet Surry in the wilderness.*” MALONE.

No torture of criticism can draw from *inhibit*, a sense that will agree with the context. *Inhabit* is the original reading ; and it needs no alteration. Milton has employed the same verb in a neutral signification, to express *continuance in a given situation* :

“Mean while *inhabit* lax, ye powers of heaven!”

Macbeth being at this time in his castle, the meaning of the passage obviously is——Should you challenge me to encounter you in the desert, and I through fear continue immured in this fortress, then protest me, &c.

Thus Clarence threatens Warwick :

I ij

“I here

“ I here proclaim myself thy mortal foe,
 “ With resolution, wheresoe’er I meet thee
 “ (As I will meet thee if thou *stir* ABROAD),
 “ To plague thee for thy foul misleading me.”

HENLEY.

373. Can *such things be,*

And overcome us, like a summer’s cloud,

Without our special wonder ?———] Why

not? if they be only like a summer’s cloud? The speech is given wrong; it is part of the lady’s foregoing speech; and, besides that, is a little corrupt. We should read it thus:

———Can’t *such things be,*

And overcome us, like a summer’s cloud,

Without our special wonder ?———] i. e. cannot

these visions, without so much wonder and amazement, be presented to the *disturbed* imagination in the manner that air visions, in summer clouds, are presented to a *wanton* one: which sometimes shew a lion, a castle, or a promontory? The thought is fine, and in character. *Overcome* is used for *deceive*.

WARBURTON.

The alteration is introduced by a misinterpretation. The meaning is not that *these things are like a summer-cloud*, but can such wonders as these pass over us without wonder, as a casual summer-cloud passes over us.

JOHNSON.

No instance is given of this sense of the word *overcome*, which has caused all the difficulty; it is however to be found in Spenser, *Faery Queen*, B. III. c. 7. st. 4.

“ —A little

“——A little valley——

“All covered with thick woods, that quite it
overcame.”

FARMER.

Again, in *Marie Magdalene's Repentance* :

“With blode overcome were both his eyen.”

MALONE.

375. ——You make me strange

Even to the disposition that I owe,] This passage seems to mean——You prove to me that I am a stranger even to my own disposition, when I perceive that the very object which steals the colour from my cheek, permits it to remain in yours. In other words——You prove to me how false an opinion I have hitherto maintained of my own courage, when yours on the trial is found to exceed it. A thought somewhat similar occurs in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, act ii. scene 1. “I’ll entertain myself like one I am not acquainted withal.” Again, in *All’s Well that Ends Well*, act v.

“——if you know

“That you are well acquainted with yourself.”

STEEVENS.

The meaning, I think, is, *You make me a stranger to, or forgetful of, that brave disposition which I know I possess, and make me fancy myself a coward, when I perceive that I am terrified by a sight which has not in the least alarmed you.*

MALONE.

Mr. Reed thinks the meaning simply is, *you make me amazed*, and cites an example of the word *strange* so used in the *History of Jack of Newberry*——“I jest

I iij

not,

not, said she; for I mean it shall be and stand not *strangely*, but remember that you promised me," &c.

HENLEY.

379. — *is blanch'd with fear.*] *i. e.* turn'd pale, as in Webster's *Dutchess of Malsy*, 1623:

"Thou dost *blanch* mischief,

"Dost make it white."

STEEVENS.

388. *It will have blood, &c.*] So, in *The Mirror of Magistrates*, p. 118.

"Take heede yee princes by examples past,

"*Bloud will have bloud* eyther first or last."

HENDERSON.

It will have blood, they say; blood will have blood:] I would thus point the passage:

It will have blood: they say, blood will have blood.

As a confirmation of the reading, I would add the following authority:

"Blood asketh blood, and death must death requite." *Ferrex and Perrex*, act iv. sc.2.

WHALLEY.

390. *Augurs, and understood relations,*——] By the word *relation* is understood the *connection* of effects with causes; to *understand relations* as an *augur*, is to know how these things *relate* to each other, which have no visible combination or dependance. JOHNSON.

Augurs and understood relations,——

By *relations* is meant the relation one thing is supposed to bear to another. The ancient soothsayers of all denominations practised their art upon the principle of analogy.

analogy. Which analogies were founded in a superstitious philosophy arising out of the nature of ancient idolatry; which would require a volume to explain.

WARBURTON.

The old copy has the passage thus :

*Augures, and understood relations, have
By maggot-pies and choughs, &c.*

The modern editors read :

*Augurs that understand relations, have
By magpies and by choughs, &c.*

Perhaps we should read, *auguries*, i. e. prognostications by means of omens and prodigies. These, together with the connection of effects with causes, being understood, says he, have been instrumental in divulging the most secret murders.

In Cotgrave's Dictionary, a *magpie* is called a *maga-tapie*. *Magot-pie* is the original name of the bird; *Magot* being the familiar appellation given to pies, as we say *Robin* to a redbreast, *Tom* to a titmouse, *Philip* to a sparrow, &c. The modern *mag* is the abbreviation of the ancient *Magot*, a word which we had from the French.

STEEVENS.

394. *How say'st thou, &c.*] Macbeth here asks a question, which the recollection of a moment enables him to answer. Of this forgetfulness, natural to a mind oppress'd, there is a beautiful instance in the sacred song of Deborah and Barak : “ *She asked her wise women counsel: yea, she returned answer to herself.*”

This circumstance likewise takes its rise from history. Macbeth sent to Macduff to assist in building the

the

the castle of Dunsinane. Macduff sent workmen, &c. but did not choose to trust his person in the tyrant's power. From this time he resolved on his death.

STEEVENS.

398. *There's not a one of them,———]* *A one* of them, however uncouth the phrase, signifies an individual. In *Albumazar*, 1614, the same expression occurs: “—Not *a one* shakes his tail, but I sigh out a passion.” Theobald would read *thane*; and might have found his proposed emendation in Davenant's alteration of *Macbeth*, 1674. This avowal of the tyrant is authorised by Holinshed: “He had in every nobleman's house one slie fellow or other in fee with him to reveale all,” &c.

STEEVENS.

407. *——he* scann'd.] To *scan* is to examine nicely. Thus, in *Hamlet*:

“———so he goes to heaven,

“And so am I reveng'd:——that must be
scann'd.”

Again, in Heywood's *Golden Age*, 1611:

“———how these are *scann'd*,

“Let none decide but such as understand.”

STEEVENS.

408. *You lack the season of all natures, sleep.]* I take the meaning to be, *you want sleep*, which seasons, or gives the relish to *all nature*. “*Indiget somni vitæ condimenti.*”

JOHNSON.

You lack the season of all natures, sleep.

This word is often used in this sense by our author.

So, in *All's Well that Ends Well*: “'Tis the best brine
a maiden

a maiden can *season* her praise in." Again, in *The Rape of Lucrece* :

" But I alone, alone must sit and pine,

" *Seasoning* the earth with showers of silver
brine." MALONE.

411. *We are yet but young in deed.*] The meaning is not ill explained by a line in *K. Henry VI. Part III.* We are not, Macbeth would say,

" Made *impudent* with use of *evil deeds*."

The initiate fear, is the fear that always attends the first initiation into guilt, before the mind becomes callous and insensible by frequent repetitions of it, or (as the poet says) by *hard use*. STEEVENS.

412. ———*meeting Hecate.*] Shakspeare seems to have been unjustly censured for introducing Hecate among the modern witches. Scott's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, Book III. c. 2. and c. 16. and Book XII. c. 3. mentions it as the common opinion of all writers, that witches were supposed to have nightly " meetings with Herodias, and the Pagan gods," and " that in the night times they ride abroad with *Diana*, the goddess of the Pagans," &c.—Their dame or chief leader seems always to have been an old Pagan, as " the ladie Sibylla, Minerva, or *Diana*." TOLLET.

426. ———*the pit of Acheron*] Shakspeare seems to have thought it allowable to bestow the name of *Acheron* on any fountain, lake, or pit, through which there was vulgarly supposed to be a communication between this and the infernal world. The true original *Acheron* was a river in Greece ; and yet Virgil gives
this

this name to his lake in the valley of *Amsanclus* in Italy. STEEVENS.

435. ———*vap'rous drop profound* ;] That is, a drop that has *profound, deep, or hidden* qualities.

JOHNSON.

There hangs a vap'rous drop profound ;

This vaporous drop seems to have been meant for the same as the *virus lunare* of the ancients, being a foam which the moon was supposed to shed on particular herbs, or other objects, when strongly solicited by enchantment. Lucan introduces *Erichtho* using it. l. 6.

“ ———*et virus large lunare ministrat.* ”

STEEVENS.

437. ———*slights*,] Arts ; subtle practices.

JOHNSON.

448. *Enter Lenox, and another Lord.*] As this tragedy, like the rest of Shakspeare's, is perhaps overstocked with personages, it is not easy to assign a reason why a nameless character should be introduced here, since nothing is said that might not with equal propriety have been put into the mouth of any other disaffected man. I believe, therefore, that in the original copy it was written with a very common form of contraction, *Lenox and An.* for which the transcriber instead of *Lenox and Angus*, set down *Lenox and another Lord*. The author had, indeed, been more indebted to the transcriber's fidelity and diligence, had he committed no errors of greater importance.

JOHNSON.

455. *Who cannot want the thought*————] The sense requires :

Who can want the thought——

Yet, I believe, the text is not corrupt. Shakspeare is sometimes incorrect in these minutiae. MALONE.

472. *The son of Duncan,*] The common editions have *sons*. Theobald corrected it. JOHNSON.

477. ——— *Thither Macduff is gone*

To pray the holy king, &c.] The modern editors, for the sake of the metre, omit the word *holy*, and read,

———— *Thither Macduff*

Is gone to pray the king, &c. STEEVENS.

484. ——— *and receive free honours,*] *Free* for grateful. WARBURTON.

How can *free* be *grateful*? It may be either honours *freely bestowed*, not purchased by crimes ; or honours *without slavery*, without dread of a tyrant. JOHNSON.

486. ——— *their king,*——] The sense requires that we should read *the king*, *i. e.* Macbeth. *Their* is the reading of the old copy. STEEVENS.

494. *Advise him to a caution,*——] Thus the old copy. The modern editors, to add smoothness to the versification, read, ——— *to a care.*—— STEEVENS.

ACT IV.

Scene I. As this is the chief scene of enchantment in the play, it is proper in this place to observe, with how much judgment Shakspeare has selected all the circumstances of his infernal ceremonies, and how exactly he has conformed to common opinions and traditions :

“Thrice the brinded cat hath mew’d.”

The usual form in which familiar spirits are reported to converse with witches, is that of a cat. A witch, who was tried about half a century before the time of Shakspeare, had a cat named Rutterkin, as the spirit of one of those witches was Grimalkin; and when any mischief was to be done, she used to bid Rutterkin *go and fly*. But once, when she would have sent Rutterkin to torment a daughter of the countess of Rutland, instead of *going* or *flying*, he only cried *mew*, from whence she discovered that the lady was out of his power, the power of witches being not universal, but limited, as Shakspeare has taken care to inculcate :

“Though his bark cannot be lost,

“Yet it shall be tempest-tost.”

The common afflictions which the malice of witches produced, were melancholy, fits, and loss of flesh, which are threatened by one of Shakspeare’s witches :

“Weary sev’n nights, nine times nine,

“Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.”

It

It was likewise their practice to destroy the cattle of their neighbours; and the farmers have to this day many ceremonies to secure their cows and other cattle from witchcraft; but they seem to have been most suspected of malice against swine. Shakepere has accordingly made one of his witches declare that she has been *killing swine*; and Dr. Harsnet observes, that about that time, “*a sow could not be ill of the measles, nor a girl of the sullens, but some old woman was charg’d with witchcraft.*”

“Toad, that under the cold stone,
 “Days and nights hast thirty-one,
 “Swelter’d venom sleeping got;
 “Boil thou first i’the charmed pot.”

Toads have likewise long lain under the reproach of being by some means accessory to witchcraft, for which reason Shakspeare, in the first scene of this play, calls one of the spirits Paddock or Toad, and now takes care to put a toad first into the pot. When Vaninus was seized at Tholouse, there was found at his lodgings *ingens Bufo Vitro inclusus*, a great toad shut in a vial, upon which those that prosecuted him *Veneficium exprobrabant*, charged him, I suppose, with witchcraft.

“Fillet of a fenny snake,
 “In the cauldron boil and bake:
 “Eye of newt, and toe of frog;——
 “For a charm,” &c.

The propriety of these ingredients may be known by consulting the books *de Viribus Animalium*, and *de Mirabilibus Mundi*, ascribed to Albertus Magnus, in which

the reader, who has time and credulity, may discover very wonderful secrets.

“ Finger of birth-strangled babe,

“ Ditch-deliver’d by a drab ;”——

It has been already mentioned in the law against witches, that they are supposed to take up dead bodies to use in enchantments, which was confessed by the woman whom king James examined, and who had of a dead body, that was divided in one of their assemblies, two fingers for her share. It is observable, that Shakspeare, on this great occasion which involves the fate of a king, multiplies all the circumstances of horror. The babe, whose finger is used, must be strangled in its birth ; the grease must not only be human, but must have dropped from a gibbet, the gibbet of a murderer ; and even the sow, whose blood is used, must have offended nature by devouring her own farrow. These are touches of judgment and genius.

“ And now about the cauldron sing——

“ Black spirits and white,

“ Blue spirits and grey,

“ Mingle, mingle, mingle,

“ You that mingle may.”

And in a former part :

“ ——weird sisters, hand in hand,——

“ Thus do go about, about,

“ Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,

“ And thrice again to make up nine!”

These

These two passages I have brought together, because they both seem subject to the objection of too much levity for the solemnity of enchantment, and may both be shewn, by one quotation from Camden's account of Ireland, to be founded upon a practice really observed by the uncivilized natives of that country: "When any one gets a fall, *says the informer of Camden*, he starts up, and, *turning three times to the right*, digs a hole in the earth; for they imagine that there is a spirit in the ground; and if he falls sick in two or three days, they send one of their women that is skilled in that way to the place, where she says, I call thee from the east, west, north, and south, from the groves, the woods, the rivers, and the fens, from the *fairies, red, black, white.*" There was likewise a book written before the time of Shakspeare, describing, amongst other properties, the *colours* of spirits.

Many other circumstances might be particularised, in which Shakspeare has shown his judgment and his knowledge.

JOHNSON.

Line 1. Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.] A cat, from time immemorial, hath been the agent and favourite of witches. This superstitious fancy is pagan, and very ancient; and the original, perhaps, this: *When Galinthia was changed into a cat by the Fates (says Antonius Liberalis, Metam. cap. 29.), by witches (says Pausanias in his Bœotics), Hecate took pity of her, and made her her priestess; in which office she continues to this day. Hecate herself too, when Typhon forced all the gods*

K i j

and

and goddesses to hide themselves in animals, assumed the shape of a cat. So, Ovid :

“ Fele soror Phæbi latuit.” WARBURTON.

2. *Thrice; and once the hedge-pig whin'd.*] Mr. Theobald reads, *twice* and once, &c. and observes that odd numbers are used in all enchantments and magical operations. The remark is just, but the passage was misunderstood. The second Witch only repeats the number which the first had mentioned, in order to confirm what she had said; and then adds, that the *hedge-pig* had likewise cried, though but once. Or, what seems more easy, the *hedge-pig* had whined *thrice*, and after an interval had whined once again.

Even numbers, however, were always reckoned inauspicious. So, in the *Honest Lawyer*, by S. S. 1616: “ Sure 'tis not a lucky time; the first crow I heard this morning, cried *twice*. This *even*, sir, is no good number.” *Twice and once*, however, might be a cant expression. So, in *K. Henry IV. Part II.* Silence says, “ I have been merry *twice and once*, ere now.”

STEEVENS.

3. Harper cries :—] This is some imp, or familiar spirit, concerning whose etymology and office, the reader may be wiser than the editor. Those who are acquainted with Dr. Farmer's pamphlets will be unwilling to derive the name of *Harper* from Ovid's *Harpalos*, ab ἀρπάζω rapio. See Upton's *Critical Observations*, &c. edit. 1748, p. 155. STEEVENS.

——'tis time, 'tis time.] This familiar does not cry out that it is time for them to begin their enchantments,

ments, but *cries*, i. e. gives them the signal, upon which the third Witch communicates the notice to her sisters :

Harper cries :—'tis time, 'tis time. STEEVENS.

4. *Round about the cauldron go ;—*] Milton has caught this image in his *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* :

“ In dismal dance about the furnace blue.”

STEEVENS.

8. *Swelter'd venom—*] This word seems to be employ'd by Shakspeare, to signify that the animal was moistened with its own cold exsudations. So, in the twenty-second song of Drayton's *Polyolbion* :

“ And all the knights there dubb'd the morning
but before,

“ The evening sun beheld there *swelter'd* in their
gore.”

In the old translation of Boccace's Novels, the following sentence also occurs :—“ an huge and mighty toad, even *weltering* (as it were) in a hole full of poison.”

“ *Sweltering* in blood” is likewise an expression used by Fuller in his *Church History*, p. 37. STEEVENS.

10. *Double, double toil and trouble ;*] As this was a very extraordinary incantation, they were to double their pains about it. I think, therefore, it should be pointed as I have pointed it :

Double, double toil and trouble ;

otherwise the solemnity is abated by the immediate recurrence of the rhyme.

STEEVENS.

16. ———blind worm's *sting*,] The *blind-worm* is the *slow-worm*. So Drayton in *Noah's Flood*:

“The small-eyed *slow-worm* held of many *blind*.”

STEEVENS.

23. ———*maw*, and *gulf*] The *gulf* is the *swallow*, the *throat*.

STEEVENS.

In the *Mirror for Magistrates*, we have “monstrous *mawes* and *gulfes*.”

HENDERSON.

24. ———*ravin'd salt sea shark*;] *Ravin'd* is gluttled with prey. *Ravin* is the ancient word for *prey obtained by violence*. So, in Drayton's *Polyolbion*, song 7.

“———but a den for beasts of *ravin* made.”

The same word occurs again in *Measure for Measure*.

STEEVENS.

28. *Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse*;] *Sliver'd* is a common word in the North, where it means *to cut a piece or slice*. Again, in *K. Lear*:

“She who herself will *sliver* and disbranch.”

STEEVENS.

29. *Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips*;] These ingredients, in all probability, owed their introduction to the detestation in which the Saracens were held, on account of the *holy wars*.

STEEVENS.

33. *Add thereto a tyger's chaudron*.] *Chaudron*, i. e. *entrails*; a word formerly in common use in the books of cookery; in one of which, printed in 1597, I meet with a receipt to make a pudding of a calf's *chaldron*. Again, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, 1635: “Sixpence a meal wench, as well as heart can wish, with calves' *chauldrons* and chitterlings.” At the coronation feast
of

of Elizabeth of York, queen of Henry VII. among other dishes, one was “a swan with *chawdron*,” meaning sauce made with its entrails. See *Ives's Select Papers*, No. 3. p. 140. See also Mr. Pegge's *Forme of Cury, a roll of ancient English Cookery, &c.* 8vo. 1780. p. 66. STEEVENS.

The word is still in common use in Leicestershire.

NICHOLS.

44. ———*a song.*] Of this song only the two first words are found in the old copy of the play. The rest was supplied from Betterton's or Sir W. Davenant's alteration of it in the year 1674. The song was, however, in all probability, a traditional one. The colours of spirits are often mentioned. So, in *Monsieur Thomas*, 1639:

“Be thou *black*, or *white*, or *green*,

“Be thou *hard*, or to be seen.” STEEVENS.

44. *Black spirits and white,*

Blue spirits and grey.] The modern editors have silently deviated from Sir W. Davenant's alteration of *Macbeth*, from which this song hath been copied. Instead of “*Blue spirits and grey*,” we there find “*Red spirits*,” &c. which is certainly right. In a passage already quoted by Dr. Johnson, from Camden, fairies are said to be *red*, *black*, and *white*.

Since the above was written, I have seen Middleton's MS. play, entitled, *The Witch*, in which this song is found; and there also the line stands:

“*Red spirits and grey.*”

MALONE.

48. *By the pricking of my thumbs, &c.]* It is a very ancient superstition, that all sudden pains of the body, and other sensations which could not naturally be accounted for, were presages of somewhat that was shortly to happen. Hence Mr. Upton has explained a passage in the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus: “Timeo quod rerum gesserim hic, ita dorsus totus prurit.”

STEEVENS.

57. *—yesty waves.]* That is, *foaming or frothy waves.*

JOHNSON.

60. *Though castles topple——]* *Topple* is used for *tumble.*

STEEVENS.

63. *Of nature's germins——]* This was substituted by Theobald for *Nature's germaine.*

JOHNSON.

So, in *King Lear*, act iii. sc. 2.

“——all *germins* spill at once,

“That make ungrateful man.”

Germins are seeds which have begun to *germinate* or sprout. *Germen*, Lat. *Germe*, Fr. *Germe* is a word used by Brown in his *Vulgar Errors*: “Whether it be not made out of the *germe* or treadle of the egg,” &c.

STEEVENS.

77. *———deftly show.]* *i. e.* with adroitness, dexterously. So, in the second part of *K. Edward IV.* by Heywood, 1626:

“——my mistress speaks *deftly* and truly.”

Deft is a north country word. So, in Richard Brome's *Northern Lass*, 1633:

“——He said I were a *deft* lass.”

STEEVENS.

78. *Apparition of an armed head rises.*] The armed head represents symbolically Macbeth's head cut off, and brought to Malcolm by Macduff. The bloody child is Macduff, untimely ripp'd from his mother's womb. The child with a crown on his head, and a bough in his hand, is the royal Malcolm, who ordered his soldiers to hew them down a bough, and bear it before them to Dunsinane. This observation I have adopted from Mr. Upton. STEEVENS.

Lord Howard, in his *Defensative against the Poison of supposed Prophecies*, mentions "a notable example of a conjuror, who represented (as it were, in dumb show) all the persons who should possess the crown of France; and caused the king of Navarre, or rather a wicked spirit in his stead, to appear in the fifth place," &c. FARMER.

A vision of the same kind is exhibited (and that perhaps from which Shakspeare took his idea, rather than from Virgil's) in the second canto of the *Orlando Furioso*. HENLEY.

80. ————*say thou nought.*] Silence was necessary during all incantations. So, in *Dr. Faustus*, 1604:

"Your grace demand no questions——

"But in dumb *silence* let them come and go."

Again, in *The Tempest*:

"——be *mute*, or else our spell is marr'd."

STEEVENS.

82. *Beware the thane of Fife.*———] "——He had learned of certain wizzards, in whose words he put great

great confidence, how that he ought to take heede of *Macduff*," &c. Holinshed. STEEVENS.

84. *Thou hast harp'd my fear aright:—————*] To *harp*, is to touch on a passion as a harper touches a string. So, in *Coriolanus*, act ii. sc. ult.

"*Harp on that still.*" STEEVENS.

91. *Shall harm Macbeth.*] So, Holinshed:——
"And surely hereupon he had put *Macduff* to death, but that a certeine witch, whom he had in great trust, had told him, that he should never be slain with man borne of anie woman, nor vanquished till the wood of *Bernane* came to the castell of *Dunsinane*. This prophecie put all feare out of his heart." STEEVENS.

98. ———*the round*

And top of sovereignty?] This *round* is that part of the crown that encircles the head. The *top* is the ornament that rises above it. JOHNSON.

104. ———*Dunsinane's high hill*] The folio reads:

———*high Dunsinane hill*———

and I have followed it. STEEVENS.

Prophecies of apparent impossibilities were common in Scotland; such as the removal of one place to another. Under this popular prophetick formulary the present prediction may be ranked. In the same strain, peculiar to his country, says Sir David Lindsay:

"Quhen the Bas and the Isle of May

"Beis set upon the Mount Sinay,

"Quhen the Lowmound besyde Falkland

"Be liftit to Northumberland."—— WARTON.

107. *Who can impress the forest;——]* *i. e.* who can command the forest to serve him like a soldier impress'd. JOHNSON.

109. *Rebellious dead, rise never,——]* We should read:——*Rebellious head,——i. e.* let rebellion never get to a head and be successful till——and then——

WARBURTON.

Mr. Theobald, who first proposed this change, rightly observes, that *head* means *host*, or power.

“Douglas and the rebels met,

“A mighty and a fearful *head* they are.”

And again:

“His divisions——are in three *heads*.”

JOHNSON.

125. —*eight kings.*] “It is reported that Voltaire often laughs at the tragedy of *Macbeth*, for having a legion of ghosts in it. One should imagine he either had not learned English, or had forgot his Latin; for the spirits of Banquo’s line are no more ghosts, than the representations of the Julian race in the *Æneid*; and there is no ghost but Banquo’s throughout the play.” *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakspeare*, &c. by Mrs. Montagu. STEEVENS.

126. *Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls:——]* The expression of Macbeth, that the *crown* sears *his* eye-balls, is taken from the method formerly practised of destroying the sight of captives or competitors, by holding a burning bason before the eye, which dried up its humidity. Whence the Italian, *abacinare*, to *blind*.

JOHNSON.

126. In former editions :

———*and thy hair,*

Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first :

A third is like the former :———]

As Macbeth expected to see a train of kings, and was only inquiring from what race they would proceed, he could not be surprised that the *hair* of the second was bound with gold like that of the first; he was offended only that the second resembled the first, as the first resembled Banquo, and therefore said :

———*and thy air,*

Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.

This Dr. Warburton has followed. JOHNSON.

129. ——*to the crack of doom?——]* *i. e.* the dissolution of nature. *Crack* has now a mean signification. It was anciently employed in a more exalted sense. So, in the *Valiant Welchman*, 1615 :

“And will as fearless entertain this sight,

“As a good conscience doth the *cracks* of Jove.”

STEEVENS.

It was used so lately as the latter-end of the last or the beginning of the present century, in a translation of one of the odes of Horace :

“——Unmov'd he hears the mighty *crack*.”——

MALONE.

132. *And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass,]*
This method of juggling prophecy is again referred to in *Measure for Measure*, act ii. sc. vii.

“——and like a prophet,

“Looks in a *glass*, and shews me *future evils*.”

So, in an *Extract from the Penal Laws against Witches*, it is said, that “they do answer either by voice, or else do set before their eyes, in *glasses*, chrystal stones, &c. the pictures or images of the *persons* or things sought for.” Among the other knaveries with which Face taxes Subtle in the *Alchemist*, this seems to be one :

“And taking in of shadows with a *glass*.”

Again, in *Humor's Ordinarie*, an ancient collection of satires, no date :

“Shew you the devil in a *chrystal glass*.”

Spenser has given a very circumstantial account of the *glass* which Merlin made for king Ryence, in the second canto of the third book of the *Faery Queen*. A mirror of the same kind was presented to *Cambuscan* in *The Squier's Tale* of Chaucer. STEEVENS.

134. *That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry ;*
This was intended as a compliment to king James the first, who first united the two islands and the three kingdoms under one head ; whose house too was said to be descended from Banquo.

WARBURTON.

Of this last particular, our poet seems to have been thoroughly aware, having represented Banquo not only as an innocent, but as a noble character ; whereas, according to history, he was confederate with Macbeth in the murder of Duncan. The flattery of Shakspeare, however, is not more gross than that of Ben Jonson, who has condescended to quote his ma-

L

jesty's

jesty's book on *Dæmonology*, in the notes to the *Masque of Queens*, 1609. STEEVENS.

136. —the blood-bolter'd Banquo——] *Blood-bolter'd* means, one whose blood hath issued out at many wounds, as flour of corn passes through the holes of a sieve. Shakspeare used it to insinuate the barbarity of Banquo's murderers, who covered him with wounds. WARBURTON.

The same idea occurs in *Arden of Feversham*, 1592.

“Then stab him, till his flesh be as a sieve.”

Again, in *The Life and Death of the Lord Cromwell*, 1613:

“I'll have my body first bored like a sieve.”

STEEVENS.

147. *Stand aye accursed in the calendar!*] In the ancient almanacks the unlucky days were distinguished by a mark of reprobation. STEEVENS.

161. *Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits:*] To *anticipate* is here to *prevent*, by taking away the opportunity. JOHNSON.

164. *The very firstlings*——] *Firstlings*, in its primitive sense, is the first produce or offspring. So, in Heywood's *Silver Age*, 1613; “The *firstlings* of their vowed sacrifice.” Here it means the thing first thought or done. Shakspeare uses the word again in the prologue to *Troilus and Cressida*:

“Leapso'er the vant and *firstlings* of these broils.”

STEEVENS.

170. *That trace him, &c.*] *i. e.* follow, succeed him.

him. So, in Sir A. Gorge's translation of the third book of *Lucan* :

“ The tribune's curses, in like case,
“ Said he, did greedy Crassus *trace*.”

STEEVENS.

184. —*natural touch* :—] Natural sensibility. He is not touched with natural affection. JOHNSON.

So, in an ancient MS. play, entitled *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* :

“ —How she's beguil'd in him !

“ There's no such *natural touch* search all his bosom.”

STEEVENS.

184. —*the poor wren, &c.*] The same thought occurs in the third part of *King Henry VI*.

“ —doves will peck, in safety of their brood.

“ Who hath not seen them (even with those wings

“ Which sometimes they have us'd in fearful flight)

“ Make war with him that climb'd unto their nest,

“ Offering their own lives in their young's defence ?”

STEEVENS.

193. *The fits o'the season*.——] *The fits of the season* should appear to be, from the following passage in *Coriolanus*, the violent disorders of the season, its convulsions :

“ —————but that

“ The violent fit o'th' times craves it as physick.”

STEEVENS.

See catch-word Alphabet.

194. ———when we are traitors,
And do not know ourselves;——] I think,
 the meaning is, *when we are considered by the state as*
traitors, while at the same time we are unconscious of guilt;
——when we appear to others so different from what we
really are, that we seem not to know ourselves. MALONE.

195. ———when we hold rumour
From what we fear,——] I think to hold
 means, in this place, to *believe*; as we say, *I hold such*
a thing to be true, i. e. I take it, I believe it to be so.
 Thus, in *King Henry VIII.*

“——Did you not of late days hear, &c.

“1 Gen. Yes, but *held* it not.”

The sense of the whole passage will then be: *The*
times are cruel when our fears induce us to believe, or take
for granted, what we hear rumour'd or reported abroad;
and yet, at the same time, as we live under a tyrannical
government where will is substituted for law, we know not
what we have to fear, because we know not when we of-
fend. Or, *When we are led by our fears to believe every*
rumour of danger we hear, yet are not conscious to our-
selves of any crime for which we should be disturbed with
those fears. A passage like this occurs in *K. John.*

“Possess'd with rumours, full of idle dreams,

“Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear.”

This is the best I can make of the passage.

STEEVENS.

207. *Sirrah*, your father's dead;] *Sirrah*, in our
 author's time, was not a term of reproach, but gene-
 rally used by masters to servants, parents to children,
 &c.

&c. So before, in this play, Macbeth says to his servant,

“*Sirrah, a word with you: attend these men our pleasure?*” MALONE.

243. ——— *I am not to you known,*

Though in your state of honour I am perfect.]

i. e. You know not me, but I am perfectly acquainted with your rank and condition. HENLEY.

249. *To do worse to you were fell cruelty,]* To do worse, is to let her and her children be destroyed without warning. JOHNSON.

Mr. Edwards explains these words differently. “*To do worse to you* (says he) signifies—to fright you more, by relating all the circumstances of your danger; which would detain you so long that you could not avoid it.”

The meaning, however, may be.—*To do worse to you*, i. e. not to disclose to you the perilous situation you are in, from a foolish apprehension of alarming you, would be fell cruelty. MALONE.

268. *Enter——]* The part of Holinshed’s *Chronicle* which relates to this play, is no more than an abridgement of John Bellenden’s translation of *The Noble Clerk, Hector Boece*, imprinted at Edinburgh, 1541. See Holinshed’s *History of Scotland*, p. 175.

STEEVENS.

270. *Let us rather*

Hold fast the mortal sword; and, like good men,

Bestride our downfaln birthdom:——] So, in

the second part of *King Henry IV.* Morton says:

L i i j

“——he

“——he doth *bestride a bleeding land*.”

STEEVENS.

To protect it from utter destruction. The allusion is to the Hyperaspists of the ancients, who bestrode their fellows fallen in battle, and covered them with their shields.

WARBURTON.

279. ——to friend,——] *i. e.* to *befriend*.

STEEVENS.

284. *You may discern of him through me,——]* By Macduff's answer it appears we should read,

——deserve of him——

WARBURTON.

289. *A good and virtuous nature may recoil
In an imperial charge.——]* A good mind may recede from goodness in the execution of a royal commission.

JOHNSON.

293. *Though all things foul, &c.]* This is not very clear. The meaning, perhaps, is this:—*My suspicions cannot injure you, if you be virtuous, by supposing that a traitor may put on your virtuous appearance. I do not say that your virtuous appearance proves you a traitor; for virtue must wear its proper form, though that form be counterfeited by villany.*

JOHNSON.

297. *Why in that rawness——]* Without previous provision, without due preparation, without maturity of counsel.

JOHNSON.

I meet with this expression in Lilly's *Euphues*, 1580, and in the quarto, 1608, of *King Henry V*.

“Some their wives *rawly* left.”

STEEVENS.

305. ——wear thou thy wrongs,] That is, *Poor country, wear thou thy wrongs.*

JOHNSON.

306. *His title is affear'd!—*] *His* (*i. e.* Macbeth's) title is *affear'd*, *i. e.* established or affirmed, since he whose duty and interest it is to endeavour to dethrone him, refuses to join in the attempt. REMARKS.

324. *It is myself I mean: in whom I know*] This conference of Malcolm with Macduff is taken out of the chronicles of Scotland. POPE.

335. Sudden, *malicious*,—] *Sudden*, for capricious. WARBURTON.

Rather violent, passionate, hasty. JOHNSON.

364. —grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming lust;—] Summer-seeming has no manner of sense: correct,

Than summer-teeming lust;—
i. e. the passion that lasts no longer than the *heat* of life, and which goes off in the *winter* of age.

WARBURTON.

When I was younger and bolder, I corrected it thus,

Than fume, or seething lust.

that is, an angry passion, or boiling lust. JOHNSON.

Summer-seeming lust, is, I suppose, lust that seems as hot as summer. STEEVENS.

Read—summer-seeding. The allusion is to plants; and the sense is, “Avarice is a perennial weed; it has a deeper and more pernicious root than *lust*, which is a mere annual, and lasts but for a summer, when it sheds its seed, and decays.” BLACKSTONE.

Sir William Blackstone's elegant emendation is countenanced by the following passages: thus, in the *Rape of Lucrece*;

“How

“How will thy shame be *seeded* in thine age,
 “When thus thy vices bud before thy spring?”

And in *Troilus and Cressida*:

“The *seeded* pride that hath to its maturity grown
 up

“In rank Achilles, must or now be cropt,

“Or, shedding, breed a nursery of evil

“To over-bulk us all.”

HENLEY.

I have paid the attention to this conjecture which I think it deserves, by admitting it into the text.

STEEVENS.

Summer-*seeming* is, I believe, the true reading. In Donne's poems, we meet with “winter-*seeming*.”

MALONE.

367. —*foysons*—] Plenty.

POPE.

It means *provisions* in plenty. So, in *The Ordinary*, by Cartwright: “New *foysons* byn ygraced with new titles.” The word was antiquated in the time of Cartwright, and is by him put into the mouth of an antiquary. Again, in Holinshed's *Reign of K. Henry VI.* p. 1613: “—fifteene hundred men, and great *foison* of vittels.” See Vol. I. p. 52. STEEVENS.

368. *Portable* is, I think, here used for *supportable*; and ought to be printed with a mark of elision.—*All these vices, being balanced by your virtues, may be endured.*

MALONE.

Portable answers exactly to a phrase now in use. Such failings may be *borne with*, or are *bearable*.

STEEVENS.

392. *Dy'd ev'ry day she liv'd.*] The expression is borrowed from the sacred writings: "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus, *I die daily.*" MALONE.

To *die* unto *sin*, and to *live* unto *righteousness*, are phrases used in our liturgy. See 1 Pet. ii. 24.

STEEVENS.

401. ——— *and modest wisdom plucks me*
From over-credulous haste.] From over-hasty credulity. MALONE.

417. *All ready at a point,*——] See catch-word Alphabet. WARBURTON.

418. ——— *And the chance, of goodness,*
Be like our warranted quarrel!——] The *chance of goodness*, as it is commonly read, conveys no sense. If there be not some more important error in the passage, it should at least be pointed thus:

——— *and the chance of goodness,*
Be like our warranted quarrel!———

That is, may the event be, of the goodness of heaven, [*pro justitia divina*] answerable to the cause.

The author of the *Revisal* conceives the sense of the passage to be rather this: *And may the success of that goodness, which is about to exert itself in my behalf, be such as may be equal to the justice of my quarrel.*

But I am inclined to believe that Shakspeare wrote:

——— *and the chance, O goodness!*

Be like our warranted quarrel.——

This some of his transcribers wrote a small *o*, which another imagined to mean *of*. If we adopt this reading,

ing,

ing, the sense will be : *And, O thou sovereign Goodness ! to whom we now appeal, may our fortune answer to our cause.* JOHNSON.

423. ———convincés] *i. e.* overpowers, subdues. See catch-word Alphabet. STEEVENS.

437. ———a golden stamp, &c.] This was the coin called an *angel* : So, Shakspeare, in *The Merchant of Venice* :

“ A coin that bears the figure of an *angel*

“ *Stamped in gold, but that’s insculp’d upon.*”

The value of the coin was ten shillings. STEEVENS.

438. ———and ’tis spoken,

To the succeeding royalty he leaves

The healing benediction.———] It must be

owned, that Shakspeare is often guilty of strange absurdities in point of history and chronology. Yet here he has artfully avoided one. He had a mind to hint, that the cure of the *evil* was to descend to the successors in the royal line, in compliment to James the first. But the Confessor was the first who pretended to the gift : How then could it be at that time generally spoken of, that the gift was hereditary ? this he has solved, by telling us that Edward had the gift of prophecy along with it. WARBURTON.

445. *My countryman ; but yet I know him not.*] Malcolm discovers Rosse to be his countryman, while he is yet at some distance from him, by his dress. This circumstance loses its propriety on our stage, as all the characters are uniformly represented in English habits. STEEVENS.

455. —rent *the air*,] To *rent* is an ancient verb which has been long ago disused. So, in *Cæsar and Pompey*, 1607:

“With *rented* hair and eyes besprent with tears.”

STEEVENS.

457. *A modern ecstasy*;—] That is, no more regarded than the contortions that fanatics throw themselves into. The author was thinking of those of his own times.

WARBURTON.

I believe *modern* is only *foolish* or *trifling*.

JOHNSON.

Modern is generally used by Shakspeare to signify *trite*, *common*; as “*modern instances*,” in *As You Like It*, &c. &c.

STEEVENS.

480. To *doff their dire distresses*.] To *doff* is to *do off*, to *put off*.

STEEVENS.

489. —*should not catch them*.] The folio reads, *latch them*, I believe rightly. To *latch* (in the north country dialect) signifies the same as to *catch*.

STEEVENS.

491. —*fee-grief*.] A peculiar sorrow; a grief that hath a single owner. The expression is, at least to our ears, very harsh.

JOHNSON.

504. *Were, on the quarry of these murder'd deer*] *Quarry* is a term used both in *hunting* and *falconry*. In both sports it means either the game that is pursued, or the game after it is killed. So, in Massinger's *Guardian*:

“—he

“ ——he strikes

“ The trembling bird, who ev’n in death appears

“ Proud to be made his *quarry*.” STEEVENS.

507. ——*ne’er pull your hat upon your brows;*] The same thought occurs in the ancient ballad of *Northumberland betrayed by Douglas*:

“ *He pulled his hat over his browe,*

“ *And in his heart he was full woe,*” &c.

Again:

“ *Jamey his hat pull’d over his brow,*” &c.

STEEVENS.

508. ——*the grief, that does not speak,*] So, in *Vittoria Corombona*, 1612:

“ Those are the killing *griefs*, which *dare not speak.*”

“ *Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.*”

STEEVENS.

519. *He has no children.*——] It has been observed by an anonymous critick, that this is not said of Macbeth, who had children, but of Malcolm, who, having none, supposes a father can be so easily comforted.

JOHNSON.

He has no children.——] The meaning of this may be, either that Macduff could not, by retaliation, revenge the murder of his children, because Macbeth had none himself; or that, if he had any, a father’s feelings for a father would have prevented him from the deed. I know not from what passage we are to infer that Macbeth had children alive. The Chronicle

cle does not, as I remember, mention any. The same thought occurs again in *King John* :

“ He talks to me that *never had a son.*”

Again, in *King Henry VI.* Part III.

“ You have *no children* : butchers, if you had,

“ The thought of them would have stirr’d up remorse.”

STEEVENS.

522. *At one fell swoop* ?] *Swoop* is the descent of a bird of prey on his quarry. So, in *The White Devil*, 1612 :

“ That she may take away all at one *swoop.*”

Again, in the *Beggar’s Bush*, by Beaumont and Fletcher :

“ ——no star prosperous!

“ All at a *swoop*!”

STEEVENS.

523. *Dispute it like a man.*] *i. e.* contend with your present sorrow like a man. So, in *Twelfth Night*, act iv. sc. 3.

“ For though my soul *disputes* well with my sense,”

&c.

STEEVENS.

536. *Cut short all intermission* ;——] *i. e.* all pause, all intervening time. So, in *King Lear* :

“ Delivered letters, spight of *intermission.*”

STEEVENS.

540. *This tune*——] The folio reads : *This time.* *Tune* is Rowe’s emendation.

STEEVENS.

Rowe’s emendation is supported by a former passage in this play, where the word, which he has introduced, is used in a similar manner :

M

“ *Macb.*

“*Macb.* Went it not so ?

“*Banq.* To the self-same *tune* and words.”

MALONE.

544. Put on *their instruments*.——] *i. e.* encourage, thrust forward us their instruments against their tyrant.

STEEVENS.

ACT V.

Line 27. AR, but their sense is shut.] The old copy has—*are* shut; and so the author certainly wrote, though it sounds so harshly to our ears as not to deserve to be restored. Thus in his 112th sonnet :

“—————my adder’s *sense*

“To critick and to censurers stopped *are*.”

MALONE.

33. *Yet here’s a spot.]* A passage somewhat similar occurs in Webster’s *Vittoria Corombona*, &c. 1612 :

“—————Here’s a white hand !

“Can blood so soon be wash’d out?”

Webster’s play was published in 1612 ; Shakspeare’s in 1623.

38. ———*Hell is murkey!*——] Lady Macbeth is acting over, in a dream, the business of the murder of Duncan, and encouraging her husband as when awake. She, therefore, would not have even hinted the terrors of

of hell to one whose conscience she saw was too much alarmed already for her purpose. She certainly imagines herself here talking to Macbeth, who, she supposes, had just said, *Hell is murkey* (*i. e.* hell is a dismal place to go to in consequence of such a deed), and repeats his words in contempt of his cowardice.—*Hell is murkey! — Fie, fie, my lord! fie! a soldier, and afraid?* This explanation, I think, gives a spirit to the passage, which has hitherto appeared languid, being perhaps misapprehended by those who placed a full point at the conclusion of it. STEEVENS.

41. ———*who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?*] Statius, in a passage already quoted, speaking of the sword by which an old man was slain, calls it, *egentem sanguinis ensem*; and Ovid, describing a wound inflicted on a superannuated ram, has the same circumstance:

——guttura cultro

Fodit et exiguo maculavit sanguine ferrum.

Met. l. 7. STEEVENS.

81. *My mind she has mated,*———] Astonished, confounded. JOHNSON.

See catch-word Alphabet.

The expression is taken from *chess-playing*:

“———that so young a warrior

“Should bide the shock of such approved knights,

“As he this day hath *match'd* and *mated* too.”

Soliman and Perseda.

STEEVENS.

85. *His uncle Siward,*———] “Duncan had two

M i j

sons

sons (says Holinshed) by his wife, who was the daughter of Siward, Earl of Northumberland." STEEVENS.

88. *Excite the mortified man.*] By *the mortified man*, is meant a *religious*; one who has subdued his passions, is *dead* to the world, has abandoned it, and all the affairs of it: an *Ascetic*. WARBURTON.

So, in *Monsieur D'Olive*, 1606:

"He like a *mortified* hermit sits."

Again, in Green's *Never too late*, 1616: "I perceived in the words of the hermit the perfect idea of a *mortified man*." STEEVENS.

94. — *Unrough youths* —] An odd expression. It means smooth-fac'd, unbearded. STEEVENS.

111. *When all that is within him does condemn
Itself, for being there?*] That is, when all the faculties of the mind are employed in self-condemnation. JOHNSON.

115. — *The medicin* —] *i. e.* physician. Shakspeare uses this word in the feminine gender, where Lafeu speaks of Helen in *All's Well that Ends Well*; and Florizel, in *The Winter's Tale*, calls Camillo, "the *medicin* of our house." STEEVENS.

119. *To dew the sovereign flower, &c.*] This uncommon verb occurs in *Look about You*, 1600:

"*Dewing* your princely hand with pity's tear."

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, b. iv. c. 8.

"*Dew'd* with her drops of bounty souveraine."

STEEVENS.

121. *Bring me no more reports, &c.*] *Tell me not any
more*

more of desertions—Let all my subjects leave me—I am safe till, &c. JOHNSON.

128. ——— *English epicures* :] The reproach of epicurism, on which Mr. Theobald has bestowed a note, is nothing more than a natural invective uttered by an inhabitant of a barren country, against those who have more opportunities of luxury. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare took the thought from Holinshed, p. 180. of his *History of Scotland*: “For manie of the people abhorring the riotous manners and superfluous gormandizing brought in among them by the Englishe-men, were willing inough to receive this Donald for their king, trusting (because he had beene brought up in the isles, with the old customes and manners of their antient nation, without tast of *English likerous delicats*),” &c. The same historian informs us, that in those ages the Scots eat but once a day, and even then very sparingly. It appears from Dr. Johnson’s *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, that the natives had neither *kail* nor *brogues*, till they were taught the art of planting the one, and making the other, by the soldiers of Cromwell; and yet King James VI. in his 7th parliament, thought it necessary to form an act “against superfluous banqueting.” STEEVENS.

130. *Shall never sagg with doubt*,——] To *sagg* is to fluctuate, to waver. So, in the 16th song of Drayton’s *Polyolbion*:

“This said, the aged Street *sag’d* sadly on alone.” Drayton is speaking of a river. STEEVENS.

To *sag*, or *swag*, is to sink down by its own weight,

or by an overload. See Junius's *Etymologicon*. It is common in Staffordshire to say, "a beam in a building sags, or has sagged." TOLLET.

131. ——loon!] At present this word is only used in Scotland, and signifies a base fellow. STEEVENS.

132. Where got'st thou that *goose* look?] So, in *Coriolanus*:

"——ye souls of geese,

"That bear the shape of men, how have ye run

"From slaves that apes would beat?"

MALONE.

137. ——lily-livered boy. ——] Chapman thus translates a passage in the 20th Iliad:

"—his sword that made a vent for his *white liver's* blood,

"That caus'd such pitiful effect——"

Again, Falstaff says, in the Second Part of *King Henry IV.* "—left the liver *white and pale*, which is the badge of *pusillanimity and cowardice.*"

STEEVENS.

—patch?] An appellation of contempt, alluding to the *py'd*, *patch'd*, or parti-coloured coats anciently worn by the fools belonging to noble families.

STEEVENS.

138. ——those linen cheeks of thine

Are counsellors to fear.——] The meaning is, they infect others who see them, with cowardice.

WARBURTON.

143. ——or disseat me now.] This word occurs in the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, by Beaumont, Fletcher, and Shakspeare,

Shakspeare, scene the last, where Perithous is describing the fall of Arcite from his horse :

“ ————seeks all foul means

“ Of boisterous and rough jadry, to *disseat*

“ His lord that kept it bravely.”

Dr. Percy would read :

“ *Will chair me ever, or disseat me now.*”

STEEVENSON.

144. ————*my way of life*

Is fall'n into the sear, ————] As there is no relation between the *way of life*, and *fallen into the sear*, I am inclined to think that the *W* is only an *M* inverted, and that it was originally written :

———*my May of life.*

I am now passed from the spring to the autumn of my days : but I am without those comforts that should succeed the sprightliness of bloom, and support one in this melancholy season.

The author has *May* in the same sense elsewhere.

JOHNSON.

———*my way of life*

Is fall'n into the sear, ————

An anonymous would have it :

———*my May of life :*

But he did not consider that Macbeth is not here speaking of his *rule* or government, or of any sudden change ; but of the gradual decline of life, as appears from that line :

And that, which should accompany old age.

And *way* is used for course, progress.

WARBURTON.

To

To confirm the justness of *May* of life for *way* of life, Mr. Colman quotes from *Much Ado about Nothing*,

“*May* of youth and bloom of lustyhood.”

And *Henry V.*

“My puissant liege is in the very *May*-morn of his youth.”

LANGTON.

So, in Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*, stanza 21.

“If now *the May* of my years much decline.”

Again, in *The Spanish Curate* of Beaumont and Fletcher :

“——— you met me

“With equal ardour in your *May* of blood.”

Again, in *The Guardian* of Massinger :

“I am in the *May* of my abilities,

“And you in your December.”

And in *Claudius Tiberius Nero*, 1607 :

“Had I in this fair *May* of all my glory,” &c.

Again, in *The Sea Voyage*, by Beaumont and Fletcher :

“And in their *May* of youth,” &c.

Again, in *King John and Matilda*, by R. Davenport, 1655.

“Thou art yet in thy green *May*, twenty-seven summers,” &c.

Again, in *The Renegado* of Massinger :

“Having my heat and *May* of youth, to plead

“In my excuse.”

STEEVENS.

I have now no doubt that Shakspeare wrote *May* and not *Way*. It is observable in this very play, that the contrary error of the press has happened from a mistake of the same letters.

“Hear

“Hear not my steps which *may* they walke.”

Besides, that a similarity of expression in other passages of Shakspeare, and the concinnity of the figure, both unite to support the proposed emendation. Thus in his *Sonnets* :

“Two beauteous *springs* to yellow autumns turn’d.”

Again, in *King Richard II.*

“He that hath suffered this disorder’d *spring*,

“Hath now himself met with the *fall of leaf*.”

The sentiment in Macbeth I take to be this: *The tender leaves of hope, the promise of my greener days, are now in my autumn, wither’d and fruitless: my mellow hangings are all shook down, and I am left bare to the weather.*

HENLEY.

The old reading is, in my apprehension, the true one. The passage in one of our author’s *Sonnets*, quoted by Mr. Steevens, may prove the best comment on the present:

“That *time* of year in *me* you may behold,

“When *yellow leaves* or few or none do hang

“Upon those boughs,” &c.

He who could say that you might behold *autumn* in *him*, would not scruple to write that *he* was fallen into the *autumn* of his days; and how easy is the transition from this to saying, that the course or progress of his life had reached the autumnal season?

The using “the sear, the yellow leaf,” simply and absolutely for *autumn*, or rather *autumnal decay*, because in autumn the leaves of trees turn yellow, and begin to fall and decay, is certainly a licentious mode
of

of expression, but it is such a licence as is to be found in almost every page of our author's works. It would also have been more natural for Macbeth to have said, that in the course or progress of life *he* had arrived at his autumn, than to say, that the course of his life itself had fallen into autumn or decay ; but this too is much in Shakspeare's manner. With respect to the word *fallen*, which at first view seems a very singular expression, I strongly suspect that he caught it from the language of conversation : in which we at this day often say, that this or that person is "*fallen into a decay :*" a phrase that might have been current in his time also. It is the very idea here conveyed : Macbeth is *fallen into his autumnal decline*.

When a passage can be thus easily explained, and the mode of expression is so much in our author's general manner, any attempt at emendation is not only unnecessary but dangerous.

In *King Henry VIII.* the word *way* seems to signify (as it does here) *course*, or *tenour*.

"The way of our profession is against it."

And in *King Richard II.* the *fall of leaf* is used in a sense not very different from that presented by the remaining words in the passage before us :

"He who hath suffered this disorder'd spring,

"Hath now himself met with *the fall of leaf*."

MALONE.

145. —*the sear*,—] *Sear* is dry. Shakspeare has the same thought in his 73d sonnet :

"That

“ That time of year thou may’st in me behold,
 “ When *yellow leaves*,” &c.

And Milton has—“ Ivy never *sear*.” STEEVENS.

159. ———*skirr the country round* ;] To *skirr*, I believe, signifies to scour, to ride hastily. The word is used by Beaumont and Fletcher in the *Martial Maid* :

“ Whilst I, with this and this, well mounted
skirr’d

“ A horse troop, through and through,” &c.
 Again, in *Henry V*.

“ And make them *skirr* away, as swift as stones
 “ Enforced from the old Assyrian slings.”

Again, in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Bonduca* :

“ ———the light shadows,

“ That, in a thought, *scur* o’er the fields of corn,

“ Halted on crutches to them.” STEEVENS.

160. ———*talk of fear*.] The second folio reads,
stand in fear. HENDERSON.

170. *Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff*,]
Stuff’d is the reading of the old copy ; but for the sake of the ear, which must be shocked by the recurrence of so harsh a word, I am willing to read, *foul*, as there is authority for the change from Shakspeare himself, *As You Like It*, act ii. sc. 6.

“ Cleanse the *foul* body of th’ infected world.”

STEEVENS.

The recurrence of the word *stuff* in the original is certainly unpleasing ; but I have no doubt the old reading was the true one, because Shakspeare was ex-

tremely

tremely fond of such repetitions. Of this several instances may be produced ; and with respect to the word *stuft*, however mean it may sound at present, it, like many other terms, has been debased by time, and appears to have been formerly considered as a word proper to be used in passages of the greatest dignity.

MALONE.

177. ————cast

The water of my land,——] To cast the water was the phrase in use for finding out disorders by the inspection of urine. So, in *Eliosto Libidinoso*, a novel, by John Hinde, 1606 : “ Lucilla perceiving, without casting her water, where she was pained,” &c. Again, in *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon*, 1638 : “ Mother Nottingham, for her time, was pretty well skilled in casting waters.”

STEEVENS.

182. —senna,——] The old copy reads—cyme.

STEEVENS.

201. ————but the confident tyrant] Macbeth was confident of success ; so confident that he would not fly, but endure their setting down before his castle.

JOHNSON.

205. For where there is advantage to be given,

Both more and less have given him the revolt ;]

The propriety of the expression, *advantage to be given*, instead of *advantage given*, and the disagreeable repetition of the word *given* in the next line, incline me to read :

———where there is a 'vantage to be gone,

Both more and less have given him the revolt.

Advantage,

Advantage, or *'vantage*, in the time of Shakspeare, signified *opportunity*. He shut up himself and his soldiers (says Malcolm) *in the castle, because when there is an opportunity to be gone, they all desert him.*

More and less is the same with *greater and less*. So, in the interpolated *Mandeville*, a book of that age, there is a chapter of *India the More and the Less*.

JOHNSON.

I would read, if any alteration were necessary :

For where there is advantage to be got.

But the words, as they stand in the text, will bear Dr. Johnson's explanation, which is most certainly right.—“ For wherever an opportunity of flight is *given* them,” &c.

More and less for *greater and less*, is likewise found in Chaucer :

“ From Boloigne is the erle of Pavie come,

“ Of which the fame yspronge to *most* and *leste*.”

Again, in Drayton's *Polyolbion*, song the 12th :

“ Of Britain's forests all from th' *less* unto the
more.”

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, b. v. c. viii.

“ —all other weapons *lesse* or *more*,

“ Which warlike uses had devis'd of yore.”

STEEVENS.

Surely, there can be little doubt that the word *given*, was caught by the Printer's eye glancing on the subsequent line ; and I think as little, that we ought to read either *gone*, *got*, or *gain'd* ; any of which will serve equally well.

MALONE.

N

Where

Where there is advantage to be given, I believe, means where advantageous offers are made to allure the adherents of Macbeth to forsake him. HENLEY.

209. *Let our just censures
Attend the true event,]* See catch-word Alphabet.

214. *What we shall say we have, and what we owe,]*
i. e. *property and allegiance.* WARBURTON.

What we shall say we have, and what we owe.]
When we are governed by legal kings, we shall know the limits of their claim, i. e. shall know what we have of our own, and what they have a right to take from us. STEEVENS.

The issue of the contest will soon decide what we shall say we *have*, and what may be accounted *our own*. To *owe* here is to *possess*. HENLEY.

216. — *arbitrate:] i. e. determine.*

JOHNSON.

So, in the 18th Odyssey, translated by Chapman:

“ ———straight

“ Can *arbitrate* a war of deadliest weight.”

STEEVENS.

228. ——— *fell of hair]* My hairy part, my *capillitium*. *Fell* is *skin*. JOHNSON.

So, in *Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany*:

“ ———Where the lyon's hide is thin and scant,

“ I'll firmly patch it with the fox's *fell*.”

So, again, in *King Lear*:

“ The *goujeres* shall devour them flesh and *fell*.”

A dealer

A dealer in hides is still called a *fell-monger*.

STEEVENS.

230. — *I have supt full with horrors;*] Statius has a similar thought in the second book of his *Thebais*:

“ —attollit membra, toroque,

“ Erigitur *plenus monstris*, vanumque cruorem

“ Excutiens.”

The conclusion of this passage may remind the reader of lady Macbeth's behaviour in her sleep.

STEEVENS.

234. *She should have dy'd hereafter;*

There would have been a time for such a word.—]

Macbeth might mean, that there would have been a more convenient *time* for such a *word*, for such *intelligence*, and so fall into the following reflection: We say we send *word* when we give intelligence.

JOHNSON.

236. *To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,]*

This repetition, as Dr. Farmer observed to me, occurs in *Barclay's Ship of Fooles*, 1570.

“ *Cras, cras, cras*, to-morrow we shall amende.”

STEEVENS.

238. *To the last syllable of recorded time;*] *Recorded time* seems to signify the time fixed in the decrees of Heaven for the period of life. The *record of futurity* is indeed no accurate expression; but, as we only know transactions past or present, the language of men affords no term for the volumes of prescience, in which future events may be supposed to be written.

JOHNSON.

So, in *All's Well that Ends Well* :

“To the *utmost syllable* of your worthiness.”

Recorded is probably here used for *recording* or *recordable*; one participle for the other, of which there are many instances, both in Shakspeare and other English writers. Virgil uses *penetrabile* frigus, for *pene-trans* frigus; and *penetrabile* telum, for *telum penetrans*.

STEEVENS.

240. *The way to dusty death.*——] We should read *dusky*, as appears from the figurative term *lighted*. The Oxford editor has condescended to approve of it.

WARBURTON.

Dusty is a very natural epithet. The second folio has :

The way to study death.——

Which Mr. Upton prefers, but it is only an error by an accidental transposition of the types. JOHNSON.

The dust of death is an expression used in the 22d Psalm. *Dusty death* alludes to the expression of *dust to dust* in the burial service, and to the sentence pronounced against Adam: “*Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.*”—Shakspeare, however, in the first act of this play, speaks of the thane of cawdor, as of one “——who had been *studied* in his *death*.”

STEEVENS.

260. ‘*Till famine cling thee* :———] *Clung*, in the northern counties, signifies any thing that is shrivelled or shrunk up. By *famine*, the intestines are, as it were, stuck together. In *Pierce's Supererogation, or a New Praise of the Old Asse*, &c. 1593: “Who would have



have thought, or could have imagined, to have found the wit of Pierce so starved and *clunged*?" Again, in George Whetstone's *Castle of Delight*, 1576:

"My wither'd corps with deadly cold is *clung*." Again, in Heywood's *Pleasant Dialogues and Dramas*, 1637:

"His entrails with long fast and hunger *clung*."

To *cling*, likewise signifies, to *gripe*, to *compress*, to *embrace*. So, in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, 1607:

"——side from the mother,

"And *cling* to the daughter."

Again, in *Antonio's Revenge*, 1602.

"And found even *cling'd* in sensuality."

Again, in *Northward Hoe*, 1607.

"I will never see a white flea before I will *cling* you."

Mr. Whalley however observes, that till famine *cling* thee, means—till it *dry thee up*, or *exhaust all thy moisture*. *Clung wood* is wood of which the sap is entirely dried or spent. STEEVENS.

262. *I pull in resolution; and begin*

To doubt the equivocation of the fiend,

That lies like truth:———] Though this

is the reading of all the editions, yet, as it is a phrase without either example, elegance, or propriety, it is surely better to read:

I pall in resolution,——

I languish in my constancy, my confidence begins to forsake me. It is scarcely necessary to observe, how easily *pall* might be changed into *pull* by a negligent writer,

or mistaken for it by an unskilful Printer. With this emendation Dr. Warburton and Mr. Heath concur.

JOHNSON.

There is surely no need of change; for Shakspeare, who made Trinculo, in the *Tempest*, say,

“ I will *let loose* my opinion,”
might have written,

I pull in my resolution.

He had permitted his courage (like a fiery horse) to carry him to the brink of a precipice; but, seeing his danger, resolves to *check* that confidence to which he had *given the rein* before.

STEEVENS.

272. *harness*] An old word for armour. So, in *The Cobler's Prophecy*, 1594:

“ His *harness* is converted to soft silke.”

HENDERSON.

285. —— *I must fight the course* ——] A phrase taken from bear-baiting. So, in *The Antipodes*, by Brome, 1638:

“ Also you shall see two ten dog *courses* at the
great bear.”

STEEVENS.

309. *Seems bruited*: ——] From *bruit*, Fr. To *bruit* is to report with clamour; to noise. So, in *King Henry IV. P. II.*

“ ——his death

“ Being *bruited* once,” &c.

Again, in *Timon of Athens*:

“ ——I am not

“ One that rejoices in the common wreck,

“ As common *bruit* doth put it.”

“ Again,

Again, in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1540: "Lais was one of the most *bruted* common women that clerks do write of." STEEVENS.

330. *As easy may'st thou the intrenchant air*] That is, air which cannot be cut. JOHNSON,

*As easy may'st thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed.*

So, Milton, *Paradise Lost*, b. vi.

"Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
"Receive, no more than can the fluid air."

STEEVENS.

333. *I bear a charmed life,———*] In the days of chivalry, the champion's arms being ceremoniously blessed, each took an oath that he used no *charmed* weapons. Macbeth, according to the law of arms, or perhaps only in allusion to this custom, tells Macduff of the security he had in the prediction of the spirit.

To this likewise Posthumus alludes in *Cymbeline*, act v.

"———I in my own woe *charm'd*,
"Could not find death."

URTON.

So, in the *Dumb Knight*, 1633, by L. Machin:

"Here you shall swear by hope, by heaven, by
Jove,

"And by the right you challenge in true fame,
"That here you stand, not arm'd with any guile,
"Of philters, *charms*, of night-spells, characters,
"Or other black infernal 'vantages," &c.

Again, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, b. i. c. 4.

"———*he*

“ ————— *he bears a charmed shield,*

“ And eke enchanted arms that none may
pierce.” STEEVENS.

342. ——— *palter with us in a double sense:] That
shuffle with ambiguous expressions.* JOHNSON.

So, in *Marius and Sylla*, 1594 :

“ Now fortune, frown and *palter* if thou please.”

Again, in *Julius Cæsar* :

“ ——— Romans that have spoke the word,

“ And will not *palter*.” STEEVENS.

357. ———— *Hold, enough.]* See Mr. Tollet’s
note on the words, “ To cry, *hold! hold!*” act i. sc. 5.
Again, in Stowe’s *Chronicle*, one of the combatants
was an esquire, and knighted after the battle, which
the king terminated by crying *Hoo*, i. e. hold.

STEEVENS.

“ To cry *hold*, is the word of yielding,” says
Carew’s *Survey of Cornwall*, p. 74. i. e. when one of
the combatants cries so. TOLLET.

358. *Re-enter —]* This stage-direction is taken
from the folio, and proves, that the players were not
even skilful enough to prevent impropriety in those
circumstances which fell immediately under their own
care. Macbeth is here killed on the stage, and a
moment after Macduff enters, as from another place,
with his head on a spear. Of the propriety of an-
cient stage directions, the following is no bad speci-
men : *Enter Sybilla lying in childbed, with her child
lying by her, and her nurse,*” &c. Heywood’s *Golden
Age*, 1611. STEEVENS.

374. *Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:*

And so his knell is knoll'd] This incident is thus related from Henry of Huntingdon, by Camden, in his *Remains*, from which our author probably copied it.

When Siward, the martial earl of Northumberland, understood that his son, whom he had sent in service against the Scotchmen, was slain, he demanded whether his wounds were in the fore part or hinder part of his body. When it was answered, in the fore part, he replied, "I am right glad; neither wish I any other death to me or mine." JOHNSON.

384. ———— *thy kingdom's pearl*,] Whether this is a metaphorical expression, or only a blunder of the press, I cannot determine. Mr. Rowe first made the alteration, which has been continued by succeeding editors, who read, *peers*. The following passage from Ben Jonson's *Entertainment of the Queen and Prince at Althorpe*, may countenance the old reading, which I have inserted in the text:

"Queen, prince, duke, and earls,

"Countesses, ye courtly *pearls*," &c.

Again, in Shirley's *Gentlemen of Venice*:

"——— he is the very *pearl*

"Of courtesy."——

STEEVENS.

Thy kingdom's pearl is a phrase of the same import with *thy kingdom's wealth*, or rather ornament. So, C. Fitz-Jeffrey, cited in *England's Parnassus*, 1600, calls Homer,

"Chief

“ Chief grace of Greece, best *pearle* of poetry.”
So, again, J. Sylvester, quoted in the same book:

“ —————peace,

“ Honour of cities, *pearle* of kingdoms all.”

Again, in *Endymion's Song and Tragedy*, 1606:

“ —————an earl,

“ And worthily then termed Albion's *pearl*.”

MALONE.

THE END.



ANNOTATIONS

BY

SAM. JOHNSON & GEO. STEEVENS,

AND

THE VARIOUS COMMENTATORS,

UPON THE

COMEDY of ERRORS,

WRITTEN BY

WILL. SHAKSPERE.

—SIC ITUR AD ASTRA.

VIRG.

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ANNO
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UPON THE
COMEDY of ERRORS
WRITTEN BY
WILL. SHAKSPERE.

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ANNOTATIONS
UPON THE
COMEDY of ERRORS.

ACT I.

Page 4. Scene Ephesus.] IN the old copy, these brothers are occasionally styled, Antipholus *Erotes*, or *Errotis*; and Antipholus *Sereptus*; meaning, perhaps—*erraticus*, and *surreptus*. One of these twins *wandered* in search of his brother who had been *forced* from *Æmilia*, by fishermen of Corinth. The following acrostick is the argument to the *Menæchmi* of Plautus: Delph. Edit. p. 654.

*Mercator Siculus, cui erant gemini filii,
Ei, surrepto altero, mors obtigit.
Nomen surreptitii illi indit qui domi est
Avus paternus, facit Menæchimum Sosiclem.
Et is germanum, postquam adolevit, quæritat
Circum omnes oras. Post Epidamnum devenit :
Hic fuerat auclūs ille surreptitiūs.*

*Menæchmum civem credunt omnes advenam :
Eumque appellant, meretrix, uxor, et socer,
Ii se cognoscunt fratres postremo invicem.*

The translator W. W. calls the brothers, Menæchmus Sosicles, and Menæchmus the Traveller. Whencesoever Shakspeare adopted *erraticus* and *surreptus* (which either he or his editors have mis-spelt) these distinctions were soon dropt, and throughout the rest of the entries the twins are styled of *Syracuse* or *Ephesus*.

See this translation of the *Menæchmi*, among *six old Plays on which Shakspeare founded*, &c. published by S. Leacroft, Charing-Cross.

At Stationers-Hall, Nov. 15, 1613: "A booke called *Two Twinnes*," was entered by Geo. Norton. Such a play indeed, by W. Rider, was published in 4to. 1655. And Langbaine suspects it to be much older than the date annexed: otherwise the *Twins* might have been regarded as Shakspeare's *Comedy of Errors*, under another title. STEEVENS.

Page 5. Comedy of Errors.] I suspect this and all other plays where much rhyme is used, and especially long hobbling verses, to have been among Shakspeare's more early productions. BLACKSTONE.

A play with this title was exhibited at Gray's-Inn, in December 1594; but it was probably a translation from Plautus.—"After such sports, a *Comedy of Errors* (like to Plautus his *Menechmus*) was played by the players: so that night was begun, and continued to the end in nothing but confusion and errors. Whereupon

Whereupon it was ever afterwards called *The Night of Errors.*" *Gesta Grayorum*, 1688. The Registers of Gray's-Inn have been examined, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the play above mentioned was our author's;—but they afforded no information on the subject. MALONE.

Line 34. *Was wrought by nature, not by vile offence.*] All his hearers understood that the punishment he was about to undergo was in consequence of no private crime, but of the publick enmity between two states, to one of which he belonged: but it was a general superstition amongst the ancients, that every great and sudden misfortune was the vengeance of heaven pursuing men for their secret offences. Hence the sentiment put into the mouth of the speaker was proper. By my past life (says he), which I am going to relate, the world may understand, that my present death is according to the ordinary course of Providence [*wrought by nature*] and not the effects of divine vengeance overtaking me for my crimes [*not by vile offence.*]

WARBURTON.

133. *Roaming clean through the bounds of Asia.*] In the northern parts of England this word is still used instead of *quite, fully, perfectly, completely.* So, in *Julius Cæsar*:

“Clean from the purpose of the things themselves.” STEEVENS.

157. ———*wend,*] *i. e. go.* See catch-word Alphabet,

222. ———I shall be post indeed,

For she will score your fault upon my pate.]

Perhaps before writing was a general accomplishment, a kind of rough reckoning concerning wares issued out of a shop, was kept by chalk on a *post*, till it could be entered on the books of a trader. So, *Kitely*, the merchant, making his jealous inquiries concerning the familiarities used to his wife, *Cob* answers :——

“ ———if I saw any body to be kiss'd, unless they would have kiss'd the *post* in the middle of the warehouse,” &c. STEEVENS.

224. *Methinks your maw, like mine, should be your clock.]* The only authentick ancient copy of this play reads “your cook.” Mr. Pope, I believe, made the change. MALONE.

237. ———that merry sconce of yours,] *Sconce* is head. So in *Hamlet*, act v. “ ———why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the *sconce* ?” STEEVENS.

254. ———o'er-raught—] That is *over-reached*.

JOHNSON.

So in *Hamlet* :

“ ———certain players

“ We o'er-raught on the way.” STEEVENS.

255. *They say, this town is full of cozenage ;]* This was the character the ancients gave of it. WARBURTON.

257. Dark-working sorcerers, that change the mind,
Soul-killing witches, that deform the body ;] Per-
haps

haps the epithets have been misplaced, and the lines should be read thus :

Soul-killing sorcerers, *that change the mind,*
Dark-working witches, *that deform the body ;]*

By *soul-killing* I understand destroying the rational faculties by such means as make men fancy themselves beasts. JOHNSON.

Witches or sorcerers themselves, as well as those who employed them, were supposed to forfeit their souls by making use of a forbidden agency. In that sense they may be said to destroy the souls of others as well as their own. STEEVENS.

260. —*liberties of sin :*] Sir T. Hanmer reads, *libertines* ; which, as the author has been enumerating not acts but persons, seems right. JOHNSON.

ACT II.

Line 14. ADR. *There's none but asses will be bridled so.*

LUC. *Why head-strong liberty is lash'd with woe.*] Should it not rather be *leash'd*, i. e. coupled, like a head-strong hound ?

The high opinion I must necessarily entertain of the learned Lady's judgment, who furnished this observation, has taught me to be diffident of my own, which I am now to offer.

The meaning of this passage may be, that those who refuse the *bridle* must bear the *lash* ; and that woe is
the

the punishment of head-strong liberty. It may be observed, however, that the seamen still use *lash* in the same sense as *leash*; as does Greene in his *Mamillia*, 1593: “Thou didst counsel me to beware of love, and I was before in the *lash*.” Again, in George Whetstone’s *Castle of Delight*, 1576: “Yet both in *lashe* at length this Cressid leaves.” *Lace* was the old English word for a *cord*, from which verbs have been derived very differently modelled by the chances of pronunciation. So, in *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578:

“To thee, Cassandra, which dost hold my freedom in a *lace*.”

When the mariner, however, *lashes* his guns, the sportsman *leashes* his dogs, the female *laces* her clothes, they all perform one act of fastening with a *lace* or *cord*. Of the same original is the word *windlass*, or more properly *windlace*, an engine, by which a *lace* or *cord* is wound upon a barrel.

To *lace* likewise signified to bestow correction with a cord, or rope’s end. So in the Second Part of *Decker’s Honest Whore*, 1630:

“———the lazy lowne

“Gets here hard hands, or *lac’d* correction.”

Again, in *The Two angry Women of Abingdon*, 1599:

“So, now my back has room to reach; I do not love to be *laced* in, when I go to *lace* a rascal.”

STEEVENS.

30. ———start some other where?] I cannot but think, that our author wrote:

———start some other hare?

So,

So, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, Cupid is said to be
a good hare-finder. JOHNSON.

I suspect that *where* has here the power of a noun.
So, in *Lear* :

“Thou lovest *here* a better *where* to find.”

Again, in Tho. Drant's translation of Horace's
Satires, 1567 :

“——they ranged in eatche *where*,

“No spousailes knowne,” &c.

The sense is, *How, if your husband fly off in pursuit of
some other woman?* The expression is used again, sc. 3.

“——his eye doth homage *otherwhere*.”

STEEVENS.

32. ——*though she pause* ;] To *pause* is to rest, to
be in quiet. JOHNSON.

41. —*fool'd-begg'd*—] She seems to mean, by
fool'd-begg'd patience, that *patience* which is so near to
idiotical simplicity, that your next relation would take
advantage from it to represent you as a *fool*, and *beg*
the guardianship of your fortune. JOHNSON.

54. ——*that I could scarce understand them*.] *i. e.* that
I could scarce *stand under* them. This quibble, poor as
it is, seems to have been the favourite of Shakspeare.
It has been already introduced in the *Two Gentlemen of
Verona* :

“——my staff *understands* me.” STEEVENS.

83. *Am I so round with you, as you with me*.] He plays
upon the word *round*, which signified *spherical* applied
to himself, and *unrestrained*, or *free in speech or action*,
spoken

spoken of his mistress. So the king, in *Hamlet*, bids the queen be *round* with her son. JOHNSON.

86. ———*case me in leather*,] Still alluding to a football, the bladder of which is always covered with leather. STEEVENS.

99. *Of my defeatures*.] By *defeatures* is here meant *alteration of features*. At the end of this play the same word is used with a somewhat different signification. STEEVENS.

99. ———*My decayed fair*] Shakspeare uses the adjective *gilt*, as a substantive, for *what is gilt*, and in this instance *fair* for *fairness*. In the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, the old quartos read :

“Demetrius loves your *fair*.” STEEVENS.

Fair is frequently used *substantively* by the writers of Shakspeare's time. So Marston in one of his satires :

“As the greene meads, whose native outward
faire

“Breathes sweet perfumes into the neighbour
air.” FARMER.

101. ———*too unruly deer*,——] The ambiguity of *deer* and *dear* is borrowed, poor as it is, by Waller, in his poem on the *Ladies Girdle* :

“This was my heav'n's extremest sphere,

“The pale that held my lovely *deer*.”

JOHNSON.

Shakspeare has played upon this word in the same manner in his *Venus and Adonis* :

“Fondling,

“Fondling, saith she, since I have hemm’d thee here,

“Within the circuit of this ivory *pale*,

“I’ll be the park, and thou shalt be my *deer*,

“Feed where thou wilt on mountain or on dale.”

The lines of Waller seem to have been immediately copied from these. MALONE.

102. ———*poor I am but his stale.*] I believe my learned coadjutor mistakes the use of the word *stale* on this occasion. “*Stale* to catch these thieves;” *Stale* here seems to imply the same as *stalking-horse*; *pretence*. I am, says Adriana, but his *pretended wife*, the mask under which he covers his amours. So, in *K. John* and *Matilda*, by Robert Davenport, 1655, the queen says to Matilda:

“———I am made your *stale*,

“The king, the king your strumpet,” &c.

Again in the old translation of the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, 1595, from whence Shakspeare borrowed the expression:

“He makes me a *stale* and a laughing-stock.”

STEEVENS.

110. *I see, the jewel, best enamelled,*

Will lose his beauty; and the gold ’bides still,]

I would read:

———*and though gold ’bides still, &c.*

and the rest, with Dr. Warburton. STEEVENS.

146. *And make a common of my serious hours.] i. e.* intrude on them when you please. The allusion is to those

those tracts of ground destined to *common* use, which are thence called *commons*. STEEVENS.

155. *and insconce it too,)* A *sconce* was a petty fortification.

So in *Orlando Furioso*, 1599:

“Let us to our *sconce*, and you my lord of Mexico.”

Again:

“Ay, sirs, *ensconce* you how you can.”

Again:

“And here *ensconce* myself despite of thee.”

STEEVENS.

178. *Lest it make you cholerick, &c.]* So in the *Taming of the Shrew*:

“I tell thee Kate, ’twas burnt and dry’d away,

“And I expressly am forbid to touch it,

“For it engenders *choler*, planteth anger,” &c.

STEEVENS.

200. *Not a man of those, but he hath the wit to lose his hair.]* That is, *Those who have more hair than wit*, are easily entrapped by loose women, and suffer the consequences of lewdness; one of which, in the first appearance of the disease in Europe, was the loss of hair. JOHNSON.

So in the *Roaring Girl*, 1611:

“His *hair sheds off*, and yet he speaks not so much in the nose as he did before.” STEEVENS.

210. ———*falsing.*] This word is now obsolete. Spenser and Chaucer often use the verb to *false*.

STEEVENS.

231. *That never words were musick to thine ear.]*

Imitated by Pope :

“ My musick then you could for ever hear,

“ *And all my words were musick to your ear.*”

Epistle from Sapho to Phaon. MALONE.

242. ———*may'st thou fall]* To *fall* is here a verb active. STEEVENS.

See catch-word Alphabet.

257. *I am possess'd with an adulterate blot ;*

My blood is mingled with the CRIME of lust :]

Both the integrity of the metaphor, and the word *blot*, in the preceding line, shew that we should read :

—————*with the GRIME of lust :*

i. e. the stain, smut. So again in this play—*A man may go over shoes in the GRIME of it.* WARBURTON.

261. *Being strumpeted]* Shakspeare is not singular in his use of this verb. So in Heywood's *Iron Age*, 1632 :

“ By this adultress basely *strumpeted*.”

Again :

“ I have *strumpeted* no Agamemnon's queen.”

STEEVENS.

263. *I live dis-stain'd, thou undishonour'd.]* To *distain* (from the French word, *destaindre*) signifies, to stain, defile, pollute. But the context requires a sense quite opposite. We must either read, *unstain'd* ; or, by adding an *hyphen*, and giving the preposition a *privative* force, read *dis-stain'd* ; and then it will mean, *unstain'd, undefil'd.* THEOBALD.

I would read :

I live distained, thou dishonoured.

B

That

That is, As long as thou continuest to dishonour thyself, I also live distained. REVISAL.

288. ———you are from me exempt,] *Exempt*, separated, parted. The sense is, *If I am doomed to suffer the wrong of separation, yet injure not with contempt me who am already injured.* JOHNSON.

291. *Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine ;——]*

“ *Lenta qui velut assitas*

“ *Vitis implicat arbores,*

“ *Implicabitur in tuum*

“ *Complexum.*” *Catull.*

So Milton, *Par. Lost.* B. v :

“ ————They led the vine

“ To wed her elm. She spous’d, about him
twines

“ Her marriageable arms.” MALONE.

295. ———idle moss.] *i. e* moss that produces no fruit, but being unfertile is useless. So in *Othello*:

———antres vast and desarts *idle.* STEEVENS.

303. ———the favour’d *fallacy.*] Thus the modern editors. The old copy reads :

———the free’d *fallacy.*

Which perhaps was only, by mistake, for

———the offer’d *fallacy.*

This conjecture is from an anonymous correspondent.

STEEVENS.

307. *We talk with goblins, owls, and elvish sprights ;]*
It was an old popular superstition, that the screech-owl sucked out the breath and blood of infants in the cradle. On this account, the Italians called witches, who were supposed to be in like manner mischievously

bent against children, *strega* from *strix*, the *screech-owl*. This superstition they had derived from their pagan ancestors, as appears from this passage of Ovid,

*Sunt avidæ volucres, non quæ Phinica mensis
Guttura fraudabant; sed genus inde trahunt.
Grande caput; stantes oculi; rostra apta rapinæ;
Canities pennis, unguibus hamus inest.
Nocte molant, PUEROSQUE PETUNT nutricis
egentes,
Et vitiant CUNIS corpora rapta suis.
Carpere dicuntur luctantia viscera rostris,
Et plenum poto sanguine guttur habent.
Est illis strigibus nomen:———Lib. vi. Fast.*

WARBURTON.

Ghastly owls accompany *elvish ghosts*, in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* for June. So in Sherringham's *Discerptatio de Anglorum Gentis Origine*, p. 333. "Lares, Lemures, *Stryges*, *Lamiæ*, *Manes* (*Gastæ dicti*) et similes monstrorum Grege, *Elvarum Chorea* dicebatur." Much the same is said in *Olaus Magnus de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, p. 112, 113. TOLLET.

Owls are also mentioned in *Cornu-Copice, or Pasquil's Night-Cap, or Antidote for the Headach*, 1623. p. 38:

"Dreading no dangers of the darkesome night,
"No oules, hobgoblins, ghosts, nor water-spright."

Again, in the *London Prodigal*, a comedy, 1605:

"'Soul, I think I am sure cross'd or witch'd with
an owl."

MALONE.

The epithet *elvish* is not in the *first* folio, but is found in the *second*. STEEVENS.

326. *And shrive you——*] That is, I will *call you to confession*, and make you tell your tricks.

JOHNSON.

So in *Hamlet*: “——not *shriving* time allow’d.”

STEEVENS.

ACT III.

Line 4. *CARKANET*,] Seems to have been a necklace or rather chain, perhaps hanging down double from the neck. So Lovelace in his poem:

“*The empress spreads her carcanets.*” JOHNSON.

“*Quarquan, ornement d’or qu’on mit au col des damoiselles.*” *Le Grand Dict. de Nicot.*

A *Carkanet* seems to have been a necklace set with stones, or strung with pearls. Thus in *Partheneia Sacra*, &c. 1633: “*Seeke not vermilion or ceruse in the face, bracelets of oriental pearls on the wrist, rubie carkanets on the neck, and a most exquisite fan of feathers in the hand.*” STEEVENS.

16. *Marry, so it doth appear*

By the wrongs I suffer, and the blows I bear.]

He first says, that his *wrongs* and *blows* prove him an *ass*; but immediately, with a correction of his former sentiment, such as may be hourly observed in conversation,

conversation, he observes that, if he had been an *ass*, he should, when he was *kicked*, have *kicked* again.

JOHNSON.

34. *Mome*,] a dull stupid blockhead, a stock, a post. This owes its original to the French word *Momon*, which signifies the gaming at dice in masquerade; the custom and rule of which is, that a strict silence is to be observed: whatever sum one stakes, another covers, but not a word is to be spoken: from hence also comes our word *mum*! for silence.

HAWKINS.

So in Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece*, 1630:

“ Important are th' affairs we have in hand;

“ Hence with that *Mome*!”

“ — *Brutus*, forbear the presence.” STEEVENS.

38. — *patch*!] *i. e.* fool. See catch-word Alphabet. STEEVENS.

44. — *I owe*?] *i. e.* I own. STEEVENS.

58. — *I trow*.] The old copy reads, *I hope*.

STEEVENS.

74. — *we shall part with neither*.] In our old language, *to part* signified *to have part*. See Chaucer, Cant. Tales, ver. 9504:

“ That no wight with his blisse *parten* shall.”

The French use *partir* in the same sense. TYRWHITT.

79. — *bought and sold*.] This is a proverbial phrase. “ To be *bought and sold* in a company.” See Ray's Collection, p. 179. edit. 1737. STEEVENS.

89. — *we'll pluck a crow together*.] We find the

same quibble on a like occasion in one of the comedies of Plautus.

The children of distinction among the Greeks and Romans had usually birds of different kinds given them for their amusement. This custom Tyn-darus in the *Captives* mentions, and says, that for his part he had

———*tantum upupam.*

Upupa signifies both a *lapwing* and a *mattock*, or some instrument of the same kind, employed to dig stones from the quarries. STEEVENS.

96. Once this—*your long experience of her wisdom.*] *Once this*, may mean, *Once for all*: let me recommend *this* to your consideration. STEEVENS.

100. ———*the doors are made against you.*] To *make* the door, is the expression used to this day in some counties of England, instead of, *to bar the door*. STEEVENS.

108. *Supposed by the common rout*] *Supposed* is founded on *supposition*, made by conjecture. JOHNSON.

The second folio has *once*; which rather improves the sense, and is not inconsistent with the metre.

TYRWHITT.

115. *And, in despite of mirth,—*] Though mirth hath withdrawn herself from me, and seems determined to avoid me, yet in despite of her, and whether she will or not, I am resolved to be merry.

REVISAL.

131. —*that you have quite forgot*] In former copies:
And

*And may it be, that you have quite forgot
An husband's office? Shall Antipholis,
Ev'n in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot?
Shall love in buildings grow so ruinate?*

This passage has hitherto labour'd under a double corruption. What conceit could our editors have of *love in buildings* growing ruinate? Our poet meant no more than this: Shall thy love-springs rot, even in the spring of love? and shall thy love grow ruinous, even while 'tis but building up? The next corruption is by an accident at press, as I take it; this scene for fifty-two lines successively is strictly in alternate rhimes; and this measure is never broken, but in the *second* and *fourth* lines of these two couplets. 'Tis certain, I think, a monosyllable dropt from the tail of the second verse: and I have ventured to supply it by, I hope, a probable conjecture. THEOBALD.

Love-springs are young plants of love. Thus in the *Faithful Shepherdess* of Beaumont and Fletcher:

“The nightingale among the thick-leav'd *springs*
“That sits alone in sorrow.” STEEVENS.

Love-springs I believe, are not the *young* plants of *love*, but the *shoots*. Love is here considered by Luciana, as a root or stock in the heart of Antipholis, the first (or what is called the maiden) growth of which having been lopped off by marriage, a renovation of shoots springs forth. This sense of the metaphor is confirmed by the following passage from Evelyn:—“There are some who would have no stakes cut from the trees, save here and there one, so as to leave

leave half the head naked, and the other standing ; but the overhanging bows will kill what is under them, and ruin the tree ; so pernicious is this half-topping : let this be a total amputation for a *new and lusty* SPRING." See Mr. Tollet's note on *Coriolanus*, act v. line 134.

The *thick-leaved* SPRINGS, in the passage from the *Faithful Shepherdess*, are the luxuriant young growth of the *coppice*, which are even the nightingale's favourite haunt.

HENLEY.

Shall Love in building grow so ruate ?] So in our author's 119th Sonnet :

" And ruin'd love, when it is built anew.—"

In support of Theobald's emendation, a passage in our author's tenth Sonnet may be produced :

" ———thou art so possess'd with murderous hate,

" That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire,

" Seeking that beauteous roof to *ruinate*,

" Which to repair should be thy chief desire."

Again, in the *Rape of Lucrece* :

" To *ruinate* proud buildings with thy hours."

MALONE.

151. *Alas, poor women ! make us not believe, &c.*] From the whole tenour of the context it is evident, that this negative (*not*), got place in the first copies instead of *but*. And these two monosyllables have by mistake reciprocally dispossess'd one another in many other passages of our author's works. THEOBALD.

152. *Being compact of credit*, means, *being made altogether of credulity*. So in Heywood's *Iron Age*, Part II. 1633 :

“———she's *compact*

“Merely of blood———”

STEEVENS.

157. ——*vain*,] *is light of tongue, not veracious*.

JOHNSON.

175. ——*sweet mermaid*,] *Mermaid* is only another name for *syren*. So in the Index to P. Holland's translation of Pliny's *Nat. Hist.* “*Mermaids* in Homer were witches, and their songs enchauntements.”

STEEVENS.

179. ——*as a bed I'll take thee*,] The old copy reads ——*as a bud*.

Mr. Edwards suspects a mistake of one letter in the passage, and would read :

And as a bed I'll take *them*, and there lye.

Perhaps, however, both the ancient readings may be right :

As a *bud* I'll take *thee*, &c.

i. e. I, like an insect, will take thy bosom for a rose, or some other flower, and,

“———phœnix like, beneath thine eye

“Involv'd in fragrance, burn and die.”

It is common for Shakspeare to shift hastily from one image to another.

Mr. Edward's conjecture may, however, receive support from the following passage in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, act i. sc 2 :

“———my

“ ————my bosom as a *bed*

“ Shall lodge thee.”

STEEVENS.

The second folio has *bed*.

TYRWHITT.

182. ————*if she sink!*] I know not to whom the pronoun *she* can be referred. I have made no scruple to remove a letter from it. The author of the *Revisal* has the same observation.

STEEVENS.

The author of REMARKS, however, thinks there can be little doubt but that the pronoun *she* must be referred to Love, that is Venus; and Mr. Reed, in confirmation of this interpretation, cites the following lines from the old ballad of *The Spanish Lady*:

“ I will spend my days in prayer,

“ *Love* and all HER laws defy.”

184. *Not mad, but mated,*] *i. e.* confounded. So in *Macbeth*:

“ *My mind she has mated, and amaz'd my sight.*”

STEEVENS.

187. *Gaze where*] The old copy reads, *when*.

STEEVENS.

196. *My sole earth's heaven, and my heaven's claim.*]

When he calls the girls his *only heaven on the earth*, he utters the common cant of lovers. When he calls her *his heaven's claim*, I cannot understand him. Perhaps he means that which he asks of heaven. JOHNSON.

198. ————*for I mean thee:*] Thus the modern editors. The folio reads,

———*for I am thee.*

Perhaps we should read:

———*for I aim thee.*

He has just told her, that she was his *sweet hope's aim*.

So

So in *Orlando Furioso*, 1594:

“ ———like Cassius,

“ Sits sadly dumping, *aiming* Cæsar’s death.”

Again, in Drayton’s *Legend of Robert Duke of Normandy*:

“ I make my changes *aim* one certain end.”

STEEVENS.

243. S. Ant. *What’s her name?*

S. Dro. *Nell, sir; but her name is three quarters; that is, an ell and three quarters, &c.]* This passage has hitherto lain as perplexed and unintelligible, as it is now easy and truly humourous. If a *conundrum* be restored, in setting it right, who can help it? I owe the correction to the sagacity of the ingenious Dr. Thirlby.

THEOBALD.

This poor conundrum is borrowed by Massinger in *The Old Law*, 1653:

“ Cook. That *Nell* was Hellen of Greece.

“ Clown. As long as she tarried with her husband she was *Ellen*, but after she came to Troy she was *Nell* of Troy.

“ Cook. Why did she grow shorter when she came to Troy?

“ Clown. She grew longer, if you mark the story, when she grew to be an ell,” &c.

MALONE.

257. S. Ant. *Where France?*

S. Dro. *In her forehead arm’d and reverted, making war against her hair.]* Our author here sports with an allusion, in which he takes too much delight, and means that his mistress had the French disease. The ideas are rather too offensive to be dilated. By a forehead

head *armed*, he means covered with incrustated eruptions : by *reverted*, he means having the hair turning backward. JOHNSON.

271. ———to be ballasted] Thus the modern editors. The old copy reads only *ballast*, which may be right. Thus in *Hamlet* :

“ —————to have the engineer

“ *Hoits* with his own petar.” i. e. *hoisted*.

STEEVENS.

275. —assured to her ;] i. e. affianced to her. Thus in *K. John* :

“ For so I did when I was first *assur'd*.”

STEEVENS.

280. *And, I think, if my breast had not been made of faith, &c.*] Alluding to the superstition of the common people, that nothing could resist a witch's power of transforming men into animals, but a great share of *faith* : however the Oxford editor thinks *a breast made of flint*, better security, and has therefore put it in. WARBURTON.

305. ———at the *Porpentine* :] It is remarkable, that throughout the old editions of Shakspeare's plays, the word *Porpentine* is used instead of *Porcupine*. Perhaps it was so pronounced at that time.

I have since observed the same spelling in the plays of other ancient authors. Mr. Tollet finds it likewise in p. 66. of Ascham's Works, by Bennet, and in Stowe's Chronicle, in the years 1117. 1135. STEEVENS.

ACT

ACT IV.

Line 4. — *WANT* gilders] A *gilder* is a coin valued from one shilling and six-pence, to two shillings.

STEEVENS.

8. *Is growing to me*——] *i. e.* accruing to me.

STEEVENS.

95. ——— *thou peevish sheep,*] *Peevish* is silly. So in *Cymbeline*:

“ Desire my man’s abode where I did leave him :

“ He’s strange and *peevish*.”

STEEVENS.

See catch-word Alphabet.

112. *Where Dowsabel*——] This name occurs in one of Drayton’s Pastorals :

“ He had, as antique stories tell,

“ A daughter cleaped *Dowsabel*,” &c.

STEEVENS.

121. ——— *meteors tilting in his face?*] Alluding to these meteors in the sky, which have the appearance of lines of armies meeting in the shock. WARBURTON.

The allusion is more clearly explained by the following comparison in the second book of *Paradise Lost* :

“ As when to warn proud cities, war appears

“ Wag’d in the troubled sky, and armies rush

“ To battle in the clouds, before each van

“ Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their
spears

C

“ Till

“ Till thickest legions close ; with feats of arms,
 “ From either end of heaven the welkin burns.”

STEEVENS.

136. *sere,*] That is, *dry*, withered. JOHNSON.

139. *Stigmatical in making,*——] That is, *marked*
 or *stigmatized* by nature with deformity, as a token of
 his vicious disposition. JOHNSON.

So, in *The Wonder of a Kingdom*, 1636 :

“ If you spy any man that hath a look,
 “ *Stigmatically* drawn, like to a fury’s,” &c.

STEEVENS.

144. *Far from her nest the lapwing, &c.*] This ex-
 pression seems to be proverbial. I have met with it
 in many of the old comic writers. Greene, in his
Second Part of Coney-Catching, 1592, says:——“ But
 again to our priggers, who, as before I said, *cry with*
the lapwing farthest from the nest, and from their place
 of residence where their most abode is.” And several
 others.

See this passage yet more amply explained in a note
 on *Measure for Measure*, act i. line 374. STEEVENS.

151. ——*an everlasting garment*] *Everlasting* was in
 the time of Shakspeare, as well as at present, the name
 of a kind of durable stuff. The quibble intended here,
 is likewise met with in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Wo-*
man Hater :

“ —— I’ll quit this transitory
 “ Trade, and get me an *everlasting* robe,
 “ Sear up my conscience, and turn *serjeant*.”

STEEVENS.

153. *A fiend, a fairy, pitiless and rough;*] Dromio here bringing word in haste that his master is arrested, describes the bailiff by names proper to raise horror and detestation of such a creature, such as, a *devil*, a *fiend*, a *wolf*, &c. But how does *fairy* come up to these terrible ideas? we should read, *a fiend, a fury*, &c.

THEOBALD.

There were fairies like *hobgoblins*, pitiless and rough, and described as malevolent and mischievous.

JOHNSON.

155. *A back friend, a shoulder-clapper, &c. of alleys, creeks, and narrow lands;*] It should be written, I think, *narrow lanes*, as he has the same expression, *Richard II.* act v. scene 6.

“*Even such they say as stand in narrow lanes.*” GREY.

Narrow-LANDS is certainly the true reading, as not only the rhyme points out, but the sense; for as a *creek* is a narrow-water, forming an inlet from the main body into the neighbouring shore, so a narrow land is an outlet or tongue of the shore that runs into the water.—Besides, *narrow LANES* and *ALLEYS* are synonymous.

HENLEY.

A shoulder-clapper is a bailiff:

“—fear none but these same *shoulder-clappers.*”

Decker's Satiromastix. STEEVENS.

157. *A hound that runs counter, and yet draws dry-foot well;*] To run counter is to run backward, by mistaking the course of the animal pursued; to draw dry-foot is, I believe, to pursue by the track or prick of the foot; to run counter and draw dry-foot well, are, there-

fore, inconsistent. The jest consists in the ambiguity of the word *counter*, which means the *wrong way in the chase*, and a *prison* in London. The officer that arrested him was a serjeant of the *counter*. For the congruity of this jest, with the scene of action, let our author answer.

JOHNSON.

Ben Jonson has the same expression; *Every Man in his Humour*, act ii. sc. 4.

“Well, the truth is, my old master intends to follow my young, *dry-foot* over Moorfields to London this morning,” &c.

To draw *dry-foot*, is when the dog pursues the game by the scent of the foot; for which the blood-hound is fam’d.

GREY.

158. ———*poor souls to hell.*] *Hell* was the cant term for an obscure dungeon in any of our prisons. It is mentioned in the *Counter-Rat*, a poem, 1658:

“In Wood-Street’s-Hole, or Poultry’s *Hell*.”

There was likewise a place of this name under the Exchequer-Chamber, where the king’s debtors were confined till they had paid the uttermost farthing.

STEEVENS.

160. ———*on the case.*] An action upon the case, is a general action given for the redress of a wrong done any man without force, and not especially provided for by law.

GREY.

167. ———*was he arrested on a band?*] Thus the old copy, and I believe rightly; though the modern editors read *bond*. A bond, *i. e.* an obligatory writing to pay a sum of money, was anciently spelt *band*.

A band

A *band* is likewise a *neckcloth*. On this circumstance I believe the humour of the passage turns.

So, in *Histriomastix*, 1610 :

“ ———tye fast your lands

“ In statute staple, or these merchants' *bands*.”

STEEVENS.

179. *If time be in debt,*] The old edition reads—
If I be in debt. STEEVENS.

197. —*what have you got the picture old Adam new apparell'd?*] A short word or two must have slipped out here, by some accident in copying, or at press; otherwise I have no conception of the meaning of the passage. The case is this: Dromio's master had been arrested, and sent his servant home for money to redeem him: he, running back with the money, meets the twin Antipholis, whom he mistakes for his master, and seeing him clear of the officer before the money was come, he cries, in a surprise;

What, have you got rid of the picture of old Adam new apparell'd?

For so I have ventured to supply, by conjecture. But why is the officer called old Adam new apparell'd? The allusion is to Adam in his state of innocence going naked; and immediately after the fall, being cloath'd in a frock of skins. Thus he was new apparell'd: and, in like manner, the serjeants of the counter were formerly clad in buff, or calves-skin, as the author humorously a little lower calls it.

THEOBALD.

The explanation is very good, but the text does not require to be amended. JOHNSON.

These jests on Adam's dress are common among our old writers. So in *King Edward III.* 1599 :

“ The register of all varieties

“ Since *leathern Adam* to this younger hour.”

STEEVENS.

210. ——— *he that sets up his rest to do more exploits with his mace, than a MORRIS-pike.*] *Sets up his rest*, is a phrase taken from military exercise. When gun-powder was first invented, its force was very weak compared to that in present use. This necessarily acquired fire-arms to be of an extraordinary length. As the artists improved the strength of their powder, the soldiers proportionably shortened their arms and artillery; so that the cannon which Froissart tells us was once fifty feet long, was contracted to less than ten. This proportion likewise held in their muskets; so that till the middle of the last century, the musketeers always supported their pieces when they gave fire, with a *rest* stuck before them into the ground, which they called *setting up their rest*, and is here alluded to. There is another quibbling allusion too to the serjeant's office of arresting. WARBURTON.

This conjecture is very ingenious, yet the commentator talks unnecessarily of the *rest of a musket*, by which he makes the hero of the speech set up the *rest of a musket*, to *do exploits* with a *pike*. The *rest of a pike* was a common term, and signified, I believe,

the manner in which it was fixed to receive the rush of the enemy. JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson's explanation of the *rest* of a *pike* is given without any clear idea of his subject; for how can a thing, which is represented by him as having a positive and distinct existence, be at the same time a mode only of some other thing, which depends for its efficacy upon it?—But, exclusive of this confusion, if a *pike* EVER HAD a *rest*, its primary use must have been to support the staff in *charging* an enemy, unless the weapon were merely defensive; and if the pike were only a weapon of defence, as described by the doctor, it would ill suit the purpose to which Shakspeare has applied it:—"he that *sets up his REST* to do more exploits with his *mace*, than a *morris-pike*."

The phrase, *he that sets up his REST*, in this instance, signifies only, I believe *he that TRUSTS—is confident in his expectation*. Thus, Bacon:—"Sea-fights have been final to the war, but this is, when princes *set up their REST* upon the battle." Again, Clarendon—"they therefore resolved to *set up their REST* upon that stake, and to go through with it, or perish." This figure of speech is certainly derived from *the REST* which Dr. Warburton has described, as that was the only kind of rest which was ever SET UP. The *REST for the SPEAR* was of quite another nature. Dr. Johnson, however, seems to have supposed that the *spear* was the same weapon with the *pike*; but they were very different, and though the *spear*, in tilting, was used

used with a *rest*, neither the *pike*, nor *mace* (on which Shakspeare here quibbles) ever was. HENLEY.

212. A *morris-pike*.] This is mentioned by the old writers as a formidable weapon. “*Morespikes* (says Langley in his translation of *Polydore Virgil*) were used first in the siege of Capua.” And in *Reynard’s Deliverance of certain Christians from the Turks*, “the English mariners laid about them with brown bills, halberts, and *morrice-pikes*.” FARMER.

Polydore Virgil does not mention *morris-pikes* at the siege of Capua, though Langley’s translation of him advances their antiquity so high. TOLLET.

So in Heywood’s *King Edward IV.* 1626:

“Of the French were beaten down

“*Morris-pikes* and bowmen,” &c.

Again, in Holinshed, p. 816:

“———— they entered the gallies again with *morris-pikes*, and fought,” &c. STEEVENS.

Morris-pikes, or the pikes of the Moors, were excellent formerly; and since, the Spanish pikes have been equally famous. See Hartlib’s *Legacy*, p. 48.

TOLLET.

243. —if you do expect spoon-meat, or bespeak a long spoon.] Or, which modern editors have thrown out of the text, signifies, *before*. Of this use of the word many instances occur in ancient writers. So in *Arden of Feversham*, 1592:

“He shall be murdered or the guests come in.”

See a note on *King John*, act iv. scene 3. STEEVENS.

The

The author of the REMARKS thinks the passage erroneously pointed, and says, that *or* is a mistake for *and*.

Cour. We'll mend our dinner here.

S. Dro, Master, if you do, expect spoon-meat, *and* bespeak a long spoon.

320. ———a schoolmaster called *Pinch*,] Thus the old copy : in many country villages the pedagogue is still a reputed conjurer.

So, in Ben Jonson's *Staple of News* :

“ I would have ne'er a cunning schoole-master in England : mean a cunning man as a schoole-master ; that is a *conjurour*,” &c. STEEVENS.

322. *Mistress*, respice finem, *respect your end ; or rather the prophecy, like the parrot, Beware the rope's end.*] These words seem to allude to a famous pamphlet of that time, wrote by Buchannan against the lord of Liddington ; which ends with these words, *Respice finem, respice funem*. But to what purpose, unless our author could shew that he could quibble as well in English, as the other in Latin, I confess I know not. As for *prophesying like the parrot*, this alludes to people's teaching that bird unlucky words ; with which, when any passenger was offended, it was the standing joke of the wise owner to say, *Take heed, sir, my parrot prophesies*. To this Butler hints, where, speaking of Ralpho's skill in augury, he says :

“ Could tell what subtlest parrots mean,

“ That speak and think contrary clean ;

“ What

“ *What member 'tis of whom they talk,*

“ *When they cry rope, and walk, knave, walk!*”

WARBURTON.

So in Decker's *Satiromastix* :

“ *But come, respice funem.*”

STEEVENS.

356. *Certes,*] i. e. *certainly.*

STEEVENS.

Kitchen-vestal,] Her charge being like that of the vestal virgins, to keep the fire burning. JOHNSON.

396. —*thou peevish officer?*] This is the second time that in the course of this play, *peevish* has been used for *foolish*. STEEVENS.

406. —unhappy *strumpet!*] *Unhappy* is here used in one of the senses of *unlucky*; i. e. *mischievous*.

STEEVENS.

ACT V.

Line 64. *THE* copy] i. e. the theme. We still talk of setting *copies* for boys. STEEVENS.

81. *But moody and dull melancholy, &c.*] So in *King Henry VI. Part I.*

“ *But rather moody mad.*”

MALONE.

82. *Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair;*] Shakspeare could never make melancholy a *male* in this line, and a *female* in the next. This was the foolish insertion of the first editors. I have therefore put it into hooks, as spurious. WARBURTON.

The

The defective metre of the second line, is a plain proof that some dissyllable hath been dropped there. I think it therefore probable our poet may have written:

*Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue,
But moodie [moping] and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair?
And, at their heels, a huge infectious troop.*

REVISAL.

Kinsman means no more than *near relation*. Many words are used by Shakspeare with much greater latitude.

REMARKS.

83. *And, at her heels, a huge infectious troop.*] I have no doubt that the emendation proposed by Mr. Heath [*“their heels”*] is right. In the English manuscripts of our author's time the pronouns were generally expressed by abbreviations. In this very play we have already met *their* for *her*, which has been rightly amended:

“Among my wife and *their* confederates——.”

Act iv. scene 1.

MALONE.

107. —*a formal man again* :] See catch-word Alphabet.

STEEVENS.

123. *The place of death, and sorry execution,*] The first and second folio read—“the place of *depth*.” Mr. Rowe made the change.

MALONE.

——*sorry execution,*] So in *Macbeth*:

“Of *sorriest* fancies your companions making.”

Sorry, had anciently a stronger meaning than at present.

STEEVENS.

Thus,

Thus, Macbeth looking on his bloody hands after the murder of Duncan :

“ This is a *sorry* sight !” HENLEY.

139. *Whom I made lord of me, and all I had,
At your important letters,———]* *Important*
seems to be for *importunate*. JOHNSON.

So in one of Shakspeare's Historical plays :

“ ——great France

“ My mourning and *important* tears hath pitied.

Again, in George Whetstone's *Castle of Delight*,
1576 :

“ ——yet won by *importance* accepted his courtesie.”

Shakspeare, who gives to all nations the customs of his own, seems, from this passage, to allude to a *court of wards* in Ephesus.

The *court of wards* was always considered as a grievous oppression. It is glanced at as early as in the old morality of *Hycke Scorne* :

“ ——these ryche men ben unkinde :

“ Wydowes do curse lordes and gentyllmen.

“ For they contrayne them to marry with theyr men,

“ Ye, wheder they wyll or no.” STEEVENS.

148. —to take order] *i. e.* to take measure. So, in *Othello*, act v.

“ Honest Iago hath *ta'en* order for it.” STEEVENS.

152. *And, with his mad attendant AND himself,]* We should read :

——MAD *himself*. WARBURTON.

We might read,

And

And here his mad attendant and himself.

STEEVENS.

172. *Beaten the maids a-row*] i. e. Successively, one after another.

So in Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*, Tale v. 6826, late edit.

“A thousand times *a-row* he can hire kisse.”

STEEVENS.

173. *Whose beard they have sing'd off with brands of fire;*] Such a ludicrous circumstance is not unworthy of the farce in which we find it introduced; but is rather out of place in an epick poem, amidst all the horrors and carnage of a battle:

“*Obvius ambustum torrem Corynæus ab ara*

“*Corripit, et venienti Ebusc plagamque ferenti,*

“*Occupat os flammis. Olli ingens barba reluxit,*

“*Nidoremque ambusta dedit.*”

Virg. *Æneid*. lib. xii. 298. STEEVENS.

Shakspeare was a great reader of Plutarch, where he might have seen this method of shaving in the life of Dion. p. 167, 4to. See North's translation, in which *ἀνθρακι* may be translated brands. S. W.

177. *His man with scissors nicks him like a fool:*] The force of this allusion I am unable to explain. Perhaps it was once the custom to cut the hair of ideots or jesters close to their heads. There is a proverbial simile—“*Like crop the conjurer;*” which might have been applied to either of these characters. STEEVENS.

There is a penalty of ten shillings in one of king Alfred's ecclesiastical laws, if one opprobriously *shave* a common man like a *fool*. TOLLET.

207. *with harlots*——] Antipholis did not suspect his wife of having entertained courtezans, but of having been confederate with cheats, to impose on him and abuse him, therefore he says to her, act i. sc. 4:

——are these your customers, &c.

By this description he points out *Pinch* and his followers.

Harlot was a term of reproach applied to cheats among men, as well as to wantons among women. Thus, in the *Fox*, Corbacchio says to Volpone:

“ ——Out *harlot* !”

Again, in *The Winter's Tale*:

“ ——for the *harlot* king

“ Is quite beyond mine arm——”

The learned editor of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, 4 vol. 8vo. 1775, observes, that in *The Romaunt of the Rose*, v 6068, *King of Harlots* is Chaucer's Translation of *Roy des ribaulx*. Chaucer uses the word more than once:

“ A sturdy *harlot* went hem ay behind,

“ That was hir hosts man,” &c.

Sompnours Tale, v. 7336.

Again, in the *Dyers' Play*, among the Chester Collection in the Museum, Antichrist says to the male characters on the stage:

“ Out on ye *harlots*, whence come ye ?”

STEEVENS.

216. ——*I am advis'd*——] *i. e.* I am not going to speak precipitately or rashly, but on reflection and consideration.

STEEVENS.

284. *mated,*] *i. e.* wild, foolish, from the Italian *matto*.

“ I think you are all *fools* or madmen.”

301. ————*deformed*] for *deforming*. STEEVENS.

302. ————*strange defeatures*] *Defeature* is the privative of *feature*. The meaning is, time hath cancelled my features. JOHNSON.

Defeatures are *undoings*, *miscarriages*, *misfortunes*; from *defaire*, Fr. So, in Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond*, 1599 :

“ The day before the night of my *defeature*,
(*i. e.* undoing)

“ He greets me with a casket richly wrought.”

The sense is, I am *deformed*, *undone*, by misery. Misfortune has left its impression on my face.

STEEVENS.

I rather think *defeatures* mean here, as in another place in this play, *alteration of feature*, or *deformity*. So in our author's *Venus and Adonis*, 1593 :

“ ———To cross the curious workmanship of
Nature,

“ To mingle beauty with infirmities,

“ And pure perfection with *impure defeature*.”

If we understand by *defeatures*, in this place, *miscarriages*, or *misfortunes*, then we suppose Ægeon to say, “ that careful hours, *i. e.* *misfortunes*, have written *misfortunes* in his face.” MALONE.

Defeatures are certainly neither more nor less than *features*; as *demerits* are neither more nor less than *merits*. Time, says Ægeon, hath placed *new and strange*

features in my face ; *i. e.* given it quite a different appearance ; no wonder therefore thou dost not know me.

REMARKS.

314. ————*this grained face*] *i. e.* furrow'd, like the grain of wood. So in *Coriolanus* :

“ —————my grained ash.” STEEVENS.

321. *All these OLD witnesses (I cannot err) I believe should be read :*

All those OLD witnesses cannot err.

i. e. all these continue to testify that I cannot err, and tell me, &c.

WARBURTON.

The old reading is the true one, as well as the most poetical. The words, *I cannot err*, should be thrown into a parenthesis. By *old witnesses*, I believe he means *experienced, accustom'd ones*, which are therefore less likely to err. So in the *Tempest* :

“ If these be *true spies* that I wear in my head,”

&c.

STEEVENS.

353. *Besides her urging of her wreck at sea,*] This is one of Shakspeare's oversights. The abbess has not so much as hinted at the shipwreck. Perhaps, indeed, this and the next speech should change places.

STEEVENS.

That however would scarcely remove the difficulty : the *next* speech is Ægeon's : both it and the following one should precede the duke's ; or there is possibly a line lost.

REMARKS.

405. *Twenty-five years*—————] In former editions :

Thirty-three years.

'Tis

'Tis impossible the poet should be so forgetful, as to design this number here : and therefore I have ventured to alter it to *twenty-five*, upon a proof, that, I think, amounts to demonstration. The number, I presume, was at first wrote in figures, and perhaps, blindly ; and thence the mistake might arise. Ægeon, in the first scene of the first act, is precise as to the time his son left him, in quest of his brother :

*My youngest boy, and yet my eldest care,
At eighteen years became inquisitive
After his brother, &c.*

And how long it was from the son's thus parting from his father, to their meeting again at Ephesus, where Ægeon, mistakingly, recognizes the twin-brother, for him, we as precisely learn from another passage in the fifth act :

*Æge. But seven years since, in Syracuse bay,
Thou knowest we parted ;*

So that these two numbers, put together, settle the date of their birth beyond dispute. THEOBALD.

407. *My heavy burden not delivered :*] The old copy reads—"are delivered." I believe, the author wrote :

My heavy burdens are not deliver'd.

Printers sometimes omit words, but never insert a new word not in the manuscript, except where they mistake one word for another.—The compositor's eye might have passed over the word *not* ; but *are* could scarcely

scarcely have been printed by mistake instead of it.

MALONE.

411. *After so long grief, such nativity!]* She has just said, that to her, her sons were not *born* till now.

STEEVENS.

THE END.



scarcely have been printed by mistake instead of it.

MALONE.

411. *After so long grief, such nativity!]* She has just said, that to her, her sons were not *born* till now.

STEEVENS.

THE END.



Annotations upon Macbeth and the Comedy of Errors

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